

**The Psalms translated and explained.**

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THE  
P S A L M S

TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

BY

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847

VOLUME I

SIXTH EDITION.

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P R E F A C E .

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The present publication owes its origin to Hengstenberg's Commentary on the Psalms. The original design was to make that work, by abridgment and other unessential changes, more acceptable and useful to the English reader than it could be in the form of an exact translation. It was soon found, however, that by far the most important part of such a book would be a literal version of the Hebrew text, and that this was precisely what could not be obtained at second hand, by the awkward and unsatisfying process of translating a translation, but must be derived directly from an independent scrutiny of the original. In attempting this, the deviations from Hengstenberg, continually in form and not unfrequently in substance, rendered it wholly inexpedient and improper to make him responsible for what was really a new translation. The only course remaining therefore was to make this general acknowledgment, that his work is the basis of the one now offered to the public, and that more has been directly drawn from that source than from all others put together. The present writer has so freely availed himself of Hengstenberg's translations, exegetical suggestions, and illustrative citations, in preparing his own version and expla-

natory comments, that nothing could have led him to forego the advantage of inserting that distinguished name upon his title-page, except a natural unwillingness to make it answerable for the good or evil which is really his own. At the same time, he considers it by no means the least merit of the book, that it presents, in a smaller compass and a more familiar dress, the most valuable results of so masterly an exposition.

In justice to his work and to himself, the author wishes it to be distinctly understood, that he has aimed exclusively at *explanation*, the discovery and statement of the meaning. To this he has confined himself for several reasons ; first, because a wider plan would have required a larger book than was consistent with his general purpose ; then, because this is really the point in which assistance is most needed by the readers of the Psalter ; and lastly, because he had especially in view the wants of ministers, who are better able than himself to erect a doctrinal, devotional, or practical superstructure on the exegetical basis which he has endeavoured here to furnish. It follows of course, that the book is not designed to supersede the admirable works in common use, except so far as it may be found to correct their occasional errors of translation or verbal exposition.

It may be thought that in order to accomplish this design, the author might have satisfied himself with a bare translation. But experience has more and more convinced him, that the meaning of an author cannot be fully given in another language by the use of exact equivalents, which are in fact so few, that the deficiency can only be supplied by the addition of synonymous expressions



or by explanatory paraphrase, or by exegetical remark directly added to the text, or by the use of all these means together. The idea which he has endeavoured here to realize is that of an amplified translation. In the version properly so called, he has endeavoured to preserve, not only the strength but the peculiar form of the original, which is often lost in the English Bible, by substituting literal for figurative and general for specific terms, as well as by a needless deviation from the order of the words in Hebrew, upon which the emphasis, if not the sense, is frequently dependent, and which has here been carefully restored wherever the difference of idiom would suffer it, and sometimes, it may possibly be thought, without regard to it. Another gratuitous departure from the form of the original, which has been perhaps too scrupulously shunned, but not, it is believed, without advantage to the general character of the translation, arises from the habit of confounding the tenses, or merging the future and the past in a jejune and inexpressive present. The instances where this rule has been pushed to a rigorous extreme may be readily detected, but will not perhaps be thought to outweigh the advantage of preserving one of the most marked and striking features of the Hebrew language.

The plan of the book, as already defined, has excluded not only all devotional and practical remark, but all attempt to give the history of the interpretation, or to enumerate the advocates and authors of conflicting expositions. This, although necessary to a complete exegetical work, would rather have defeated the design of this one, both by adding to its bulk and by repelling a large class of readers. It has therefore been thought better to exclude

it, or rather to reserve it for a kindred work upon a larger scale, if such should hereafter be demanded by the public. The same course has been taken with respect to a great mass of materials, relating to those topics which would naturally find their place in a Critical Introduction. Many of these, and such as are particularly necessary to the exposition, have been noticed incidentally as they occur. But synoptical summaries of these, and full discussions of the various questions, as to the age and authors of the several psalms, the origin and principle of their arrangement, the best mode of classification, and the principles on which they ought to be interpreted, would fill a volume by themselves, without materially promoting the main object of the present publication. As the topics thus necessarily excluded will probably constitute a principal subject of the author's private and professional studies for some time to come, he is not without the hope of being able to bring something of this kind before the public, either in a separate work upon the Psalms, or in a general Introduction to the Scriptures.

The difficulty of discussing these preliminary matters within reasonable compass, although great in the case of any important part of Scripture, is aggravated by the peculiar structure of the Psalter, the most miscellaneous of the sacred books, containing a hundred and fifty compositions, each complete in itself, and varying in length, from two sentences (Ps. cxvii) to a hundred and seventy-six (Ps. cxix), as well as in subject, style, and tone, the work of many authors, and of different ages; so that a superficial reader might be tempted to regard it as a random or fortuitous collection of unconnected and incongruous materials.

A closer inspection shows, however, that this heterogeneous mass is not without a bond of union ; that these hundred and fifty independent pieces, different as they are, have this in common, that they are all poetical, not merely imaginative and expressive of feeling, but stamped externally with that peculiar character of parallelism, which distinguishes the higher style of Hebrew composition from ordinary prose. A still more marked resemblance is that they are all not only poetical but lyrical, i. e. songs, poems intended to be sung, and with a musical accompaniment. Thirdly, they are all religious lyrics, even those which seem at first sight the most secular in theme and spirit, but which are all found on inquiry to be strongly expressive of religious feeling. In the fourth place, they are all ecclesiastical lyrics, psalms or hymns, intended to be permanently used in public worship, not excepting those which bear the clearest impress of original connection with the social, domestic, or personal relations and experience of the writers.

The book being thus invested with a certain unity of spirit, form, and purpose, we are naturally led to seek for something in the psalms themselves, which may determine more definitely their relation to each other. The first thing of this kind that presents itself is the existence, in a very large proportion, of an ancient title or inscription, varying in length and fulness ; sometimes simply describing the composition, as a psalm, a song, a prayer, etc. ; sometimes stating the subject or historical occasion, either in plain or enigmatical expressions ; sometimes directing the performance, by indicating the accompanying instrument, by specifying the appropriate key or mode, or by

naming the particular performer; these various intimations occurring sometimes singly, but frequently in combination.

The strenuous attempts which have been made by modern writers to discredit these inscriptions, as spurious additions of a later date, containing groundless and erroneous conjectures, often at variance with the terms and substance of the psalm itself, are defeated by the fact that they are found in the Hebrew text, as far as we can trace its history, not as addenda, but as integral parts of the composition; that such indications of the author and the subject, at the commencement of a composition, are familiar both to classical and oriental usage; and that the truth of these inscriptions may in every case be vindicated, and in none more successfully than those which seem at first sight least defensible, and which have therefore been appealed to, with most confidence, as proofs of spuriousness and recent date.

The details included in this general statement will be pointed out as they occur, but are here referred to by anticipation, to explain and vindicate the constant treatment of the titles in this volume as an integral part of the sacred text, which in some editions of the Bible has been mutilated by omitting them, and in others dislocated or confused, for purposes of reference, by passing them over in the numeration of the verses. As this last arrangement is familiar to all readers of the English Bible, an attempt has been made in the following exposition to consult their convenience, by adding the numbers of the English to those of the Hebrew text, wherever they are different.

Another point of contact and resemblance between these apparently detached and independent compositions

is the frequent recurrence of set phrases and of certain forms extending to the structure of whole psalms, such as the alphabetical arrangement, in which the successive sentences or paragraphs begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the more remarkable because these alphabetic psalms have all a common character, distinguishing them from the rest, to wit, that instead of a progression of ideas, they consist of variations on a theme propounded at the outset, whether this be regarded as the cause or the effect of the peculiar form itself.

The same inquiries which have led to these conclusions also show, that the arrangement of the psalms in the collection is by no means so unmeaning and fortuitous as may at first sight seem to be the case, but that in many instances at least, a reason may be found for the juxtaposition, in resemblance or identity of subject or historical occasion, or in some remarkable coincidence of general form or of particular expressions. If in some cases it is difficult to trace the reason of the collocation, there are others in which two psalms bear so intimate and obvious a mutual relation, that they seem to constitute a pair or double psalm, either because they were originally meant to match each other, or because one has been subsequently added for the purpose. Sometimes, particularly in the latter part of the collection, we may trace not only pairs but trilogies and even more extensive systems of connected psalms, each independent of the rest, and yet together forming beautiful and striking combinations, particularly when the nucleus or the basis of the series is an ancient psalm, for instance one of David's, to which others

have been added, in the way of variation or of imitation, at a later period, such as that of the Captivity.

Although the facts just mentioned are sufficient to evince, that the Book of Psalms was not thrown together at random, but adjusted by a careful hand, the principle of the arrangement is not always so apparent, or of such a nature, as to repress the wish to classify the psalms and reduce them to some systematic order. The most obvious arrangement would be that by authors, if the data were sufficient. But although the titles ascribe one to Moses, seventy-two to David, two to Solomon, twelve to Asaph, one to Ethan, and eleven to the Sons of Korah, it is doubtful in some of the cases, more particularly those last mentioned, whether the title was designed to indicate the author or the musical performer, and more than fifty are anonymous. In some of these the hand of David may be still distinctly traced, but as to most, we are abandoned to conjecture, which of course affords no solid basis for a satisfactory or useful distribution.

Another principle of classification is the internal character, the subject, style, and manner of the psalms. This was applied by the older writers, in accordance with the forms of artificial rhetoric, and with endless variety in the result. But the best application of the principle is that proposed by Hengstenberg, and founded on the tone or pious feeling which the psalm expresses; whether joyous, as in the general psalms of praise and more especially in those of thanksgiving; or sad, as in the querulous and penitential psalms; or calm, as in most of the prophetic and didactic psalms. All these, however, are arrangements which the reader can make best to please himself.



and which are rather the results of exposition than preliminary aids to it.

Apart from these attempts at systematic distribution and arrangement, there is also a question with respect to the division of the Psalter as it stands. There is an ancient division into five parts, corresponding, as the Rabbins say, to the five books of Moses, and indicated by doxologies at the close of Ps. xli, lxxii, lxxxix, cvi, while Ps. cl is itself a doxology, winding up the whole. The modern critics, more especially in Germany, have tasked their ingenuity to prove that these are distinct collections, contemporaneous or successive, of detached compositions, afterwards combined to form the present Psalter. But they never have been able to account, with any plausibility or show of truth, for the remarkable position which the psalms of David occupy in all parts of the book. A much more probable hypothesis, though coupled with a theory, to say the least, extremely dubious, is that of Hengstenberg, who looks upon the actual arrangement as the work of Ezra, or some other skilful and authoritative hand, and accounts for the division into five books as follows. The first book (Ps. i—xli) contains only psalms of David, in which the use of the divine name Jehovah is predominant. The second (Ps. xlii—lxxii) contains psalms of David and his contemporaries, i. e. Solomon, Asaph, and the Sons of Korah, in which the predominant divine name is Elohim. The third (Ps. lxxiii—lxxxix) contains psalms of Asaph and the Sons of Korah, in which the name Jehovah is predominant. The fourth (Ps. xc—cvi) and fifth (cvii—cl) contain, for the most part psalms of later date, the principal exceptions being one by

Moses (Ps. xc.), and several of David's, to which others in the same strain have been added, in the way already mentioned.

However ingenious this hypothesis may be, it will be seen at once that it contributes very little to the just appreciation or correct interpretation of the several psalms, except by enabling us, in certain cases, to derive illustration from a more extended context, as the reader will find stated in its proper place. Even granting therefore the historical assumption upon which it rests, and the favourite doctrine as to the divine names, with which it is to some extent identified, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to have stated it in outline, leaving the reader to compare it with the facts as they successively present themselves, and reserving a more full investigation of the general question to another time and place.

The best arrangement for the ordinary student of the Psalter is the actual arrangement of the book itself; first, because we have no better, and the efforts to invent a better have proved fruitless; then, because, as we have seen, there are sufficient indications of a principle or purpose in this actual arrangement, whether we can always trace it there or not; and lastly, because uniform tradition and analogy agree in representing it as highly probable, that this arrangement was the work of Ezra, the inspired collector and *rédacteur* of the canon, so that even if nothing more should ever be discovered, with respect to his particular design or plan, we have still the satisfaction of relying, not on chance, but on a competent or rather an infallible authority, as well as the advantage of studying the psalms in a connection and an order which may pos-

sibly throw light upon them, even when it seems to us most fortuitous or arbitrary.

If any subdivision of the book is needed, as a basis or a means of more convenient exposition, it may be obtained by taking, as the central column of this splendid fabric its most ancient portion, the sublime and affecting Prayer of Moses, known from time immemorial as the Ninetieth Psalm, and suffering this, as a dividing line, to separate the whole into two great parts, the first composed entirely of psalms belonging to the times of David, the other of a few such, with a much greater number of later compositions, founded on them and connected with them.

This simple distribution seems to secure all the substantial advantages of Hengstenberg's hypothesis, without its complexity or doubtful points. Among the latter may be reckoned the extraordinary stress laid by this eminent interpreter on what may be called Symbolical Arithmetic, or the significance ascribed to the number of verses, of Selahs, of Jehovahs, of Elohims, used in any given psalm. Setting out from the unquestionable fact, that certain numbers are symbolically used in the Old Testament; that seven is the symbol of the covenant, twelve of the theocracy, ten of completeness or perfection, five of the reverse, etc., he attempts to trace the application of this principle throughout the psalms, and not, as might have been expected, without many palpable failures to establish his favourite and foregone conclusion. The effect which this singular prepossession might have had upon his exposition is prevented by his happily restricting it entirely to form and structure, and putting it precisely on a level with the alphabetical arrangement

of the Hebrews, and with rhyme as used by other nations. There is still, however, reason to regret the space allotted to this subject in his volumes, and good ground for excluding it from works of an humbler and more popular description. As all the views of such a mind, however, are at least entitled to consideration, this subject may appropriately take its place among the topics of a Critical Introduction.

With respect to the historical relations of the Psalter and its bearings on the other parts of Scripture, it will be sufficient to remind the reader, that the Mosaic system reached its culminating point and full development in the reign of David, when the land of promise was in full possession, the provisions of the law for the first time fully carried out, and a permanent sanctuary secured and, we may even say, prospectively erected. The chain of Messianic promises, which for ages had been broken, or concealed beneath the prophetic ritual, was now renewed by the addition of a new link, in the great Messianic promise made to David (2 Sam. vii) of perpetual succession in his family. As the head of this royal race from which the Messiah was to spring, and as the great theocratical model of succeeding ages, who is mentioned more frequently in prophecy and gospel than all his natural descendants put together, he was inspired to originate a new kind of sacred composition, that of Psalmody, or rather to educe from the germ which Moses had planted an abundant harvest of religious poetry, not for his own private use, but for that of the Church, in the new form of public service which he added by divine command to the Mosaic ritual. As an inspired psalmist, as the founder and director of the tem

ple-music, and as a model and exemplar to those after him, David's position is unique in sacred history. As his military prowess had been necessary to complete the conquest of the land, so his poetical and musical genius was necessary to secure his influence upon the church forever. The result is, that no part of the Bible has been so long, so constantly, and so extensively familiar, both to Jews and Christians, as the PSALMS OF DAVID. This *denominatio a potiori* is entirely correct, as all the other writers of the psalms, excepting Moses, merely carry out and vary what had been already done by David; and as if to guard the system from deterioration, the further we proceed the more direct and obvious is this dependence upon David, as "the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1), the master and the model of all other psalmists, from the days of Solomon to those of Ezra.

The interesting questions which have so often been discussed, as to the theology and ethics of the Psalter, and especially in reference to the doctrine of a Messiah and a future state, and to the so-called imprecations of the psalms, can be satisfactorily settled only by detailed interpretation of the passages concerned, and any summary anticipation of the general result may here be spared, although it would be highly appropriate in a Critical Introduction.

After this brief statement of preliminary points which might be fully treated in an Introduction, it only remains to add, in explanation of the plan adopted in the work itself, that the reader is constantly supposed to be familiar with the Hebrew text and with the authorized version.

but that in order to make the exposition accessible to a larger class of educated readers, the original words have been introduced but sparingly, and only for the purpose of saving space and avoiding an awkward circumlocution. The translation of the text is printed in italic type as prose, partly for a reason just assigned, to save room; partly because it is really prose and not verse, according to the common acceptation of those terms; partly, because the effect of the poetical element, so far as it exists, is weakened rather than enhanced when printed as irregular blank verse; but especially because the version is not meant to stand by itself or to be continuously read, but to be part and parcel of the exposition, and to be qualified by the accompanying paraphrase and comments.

The religious uses of the Psalms, both doctrinal and practical, though not directly aimed at in these volumes, are so far from being undervalued by the author, and indeed so essential to his ultimate design, that any effect which the book may have, however humble or remote, in the promotion of this end, will be esteemed by him as its most flattering success and the most acceptable reward of his exertions.

*Princeton, May 1, 1850.*



# THE PSALMS.

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## PSALM I.

THE book opens with an exquisite picture of the truly Happy Man, as seen from the highest ground of the old dispensation. He is described both literally and figuratively, positively and negatively, directly and by contrast, with respect both to his character and his condition, here and hereafter. The compression of all this into so short a composition, without confusion or obscurity, and with a high degree of graphic vividness, shows what the psalm is in a rhetorical or literary point of view, apart from its religious import and divine authority. Its moral design is both didactic and consolatory. There is no trace of any particular historical occasion or allusion. The terms employed are general, and admit of an easy application to all times and places where the word of God is known. The psalm indeed contains a summary of the doctrine taught in this book and in the scriptures generally, as to the connexion between happiness and goodness. It is well placed, therefore, as an introduction to the whole collection, and although anonymous, was probably composed by David. It is altogether worthy of this origin, and corresponds, in form and substance, to the next psalm, which is certainly by David. The two seem indeed to form a pair or double psalm, of which arrangement there are several other instances. The structure of the first psalm is

symmetrical but simple, and the style removed from that of elevated prose by nothing but the use of strong and lively figures

1. The Happy Man is first described in literal but negative expressions, i. e. by stating what he does not habitually do. The description opens with a kind of admiring exclamation. (*Oh the blessedness of the man!*) The plural form of the original (*felicities* or *happinesses*), if anything more than a grammatical idiom like *ashes*, *means*, &c. in our language, may denote fulness and variety of happiness, as if he had said, *How completely happy is the man!* The negative description follows. *Happy the man who has not walked*, a common figure for the course of life or the habitual conduct, which is furthermore suggested by the use of the past tense, but without excluding the present, who has not walked and does not walk, *in the counsel*, i. e. live after the manner, on the principles, or according to the plans, *of wicked (men)*, and *in the way of sinners has not stood*. The word translated *sinners* properly denotes those who fall short of the standard of duty, as the word translated *wicked* denotes those who positively violate a rule by disorderly conduct. Together they express the whole idea of ungodly or unrighteous men. *And in the seat*, not the chair, but the company, or the place where men convene and sit together, *of scorers*, scoffers, those who treat religion with contempt, *has not sat*. The three verbs denote the three acts or postures of a waking man, namely, walking, standing, sitting, and are therefore well adapted to express the whole course of life or conduct. It is also possible that a climax was intended, so that walking, standing and sitting in the company of sinners will denote successive stages of deterioration, first occasional conformity, then fixed association, then established residence among the wicked, not as a mere spectator or companion, but as one of themselves. The same kind of negative description reappears in Psalm xxvi. 4, 5, and in Jer xxi. 17. It is of course implied that no one, of whom any of

these things can be affirmed, is entitled to the character of a Happy Man.

2. A positive trait is now added to the picture. Having shown what the truly happy man does not, the Psalmist shows us what he does. *But*, on the contrary, in contrast with the previous description, *in the law of Jehovah*, i. e. the written revelation of his will, and more especially the Pentateuch or Law of Moses, which lay at the foundation of the Hebrew Scriptures, *(is) his delight*, not merely his employment, or his trust, but his pleasure, his happiness. *And in his law he will meditate*, i. e. he does so and will do so still, not merely as a theme of speculation or study, but as a cherished object of affection, a favourite subject of the thoughts, *day and night*, i. e. at all times, in every interval of other duties, nay in the midst of other duties, this is the theme to which his mind spontaneously reverts. The cordial attachment to an unfinished revelation, here implicitly enjoined, shows clearly what is due to the completed word of God which we possess.

3. The literal description of the Happy Man, both in its negative and positive form, is followed by a beautiful comparison, expressive of his character and his condition. *And he is*, or he shall be; the present and the future insensibly run into each other, so as to suggest the idea of continuous or permanent condition, like the past and present in the first verse. *And he is*, or shall be, *like a tree*, a lively emblem of vitality and fruitfulness. He is not, however, like a tree growing wild, but *like a tree planted*, in the most favourable situation, *on or over*, i. e. overhanging, *streams of water*. The original words properly denote canals or channels, as customary means of artificial irrigation. Hence the single tree is said to overhang more than one, because surrounded by them. The image presented is that of a highly cultivated spot, and implies security and care.

such as could not be enjoyed in the most luxuriant wilderness or forest. The divine culture thus experienced is the cause of the effect represented by the rest of the comparison. *Which (tree) will give, or yield, its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither*; it shall lose neither its utility nor beauty. This is then expressed in a more positive and prosaic form. *And all, or every thing, which he, the man represented by the verdant fruitful tree, shall do, he shall make to prosper, or do prosperously, with good success.* This pleasing image is in perfect keeping with the scope of the psalm, which is not to describe the righteous man, as such, but the truly happy man, with whom the righteous man is afterwards identified. The neglect of this peculiar feature of the composition impairs its moral as well as its rhetorical effect, by making it an austere declaration of what will be expected from a good man, rather than a joyous exhibition of his happy lot. That the common experience, even of the best men, falls short of this description, is because their character and life fall short of that presented in the two preceding verses. The whole description is not so much a picture drawn from real life, as an ideal standard or model, by striving to attain which our aims and our attainments will be elevated, though imperfect after all.

4. *Not so the wicked.* The direct description of the Happy Man is heightened and completed by comparison with others. *Not so the wicked*, i. e. neither in condition nor in character. The dependence of the one upon the other is suggested by describing them as wicked, rather than unhappy. *Not so*, i. e. not thus happy, *(are) the wicked*, because they are wicked, and are therefore destitute of all that constitutes the happiness before described. The immediate reference, in the phrase *not so*, is to the beautiful, well-watered, green, and thriving tree of the preceding verse. To this delightful emblem of a healthful happy state the Psalmist now opposes one drawn likewise from

the vegetable world, but as totally unlike the first as possible. The wicked are not represented by a tree, not even by a barren tree, a dead tree, a prostrate tree, a shrub, a weed, all which are figures not unfrequent in the Scriptures. But all these are more or less associated with the natural condition of a living plant, and therefore insufficient to present the necessary contrast. This is finely done by a comparison with *chaff*, which, though a vegetable substance, and connected in its origin with one of the most valuable products of the earth, is itself neither living, fruitful, nor nutritious, but only fit to be removed and scattered by the wind, in the ancient and oriental mode of winnowing. There is a double fitness in the emblem here presented, as suggesting the idea of intrinsic worthlessness, and at the same time that of contrast with the useful grain, with which it came into existence, and from which it shall be separated only to be blown away or burnt. *Not so the wicked, but like the chaff, which the wind drives away.* The same comparison is used in Psalm xxxv. 5. Isa. xvii. 13. xxix. 5. Hos. xiii. 3. Zeph. ii. 2. Job xxi. 18, and by John the Baptist, in Mat. iii. 12, with obvious allusion to this psalm, but with a new figure, that of burning, which seems to be intended to denote final and complete destruction, while in all the other cases, the idea suggested by the chaff being blown away is that of violent and rapid disappearance.

5. *Therefore*, because they are unlike a living tree, and like the worthless chaff, fit only to be scattered by the wind, *wicked (men) shall not stand*, i. e. stand their ground or be able to sustain themselves, *in the judgment*; i. e. at the bar of God. This includes two ideas, that of God's unerring estimation of all creatures at their real value, and that of his corresponding action towards them. The wicked shall neither be approved by God, nor, as a necessary consequence, continue to enjoy his favour, even in appearance. Whatever providential inequali-

ties may now exist will all be rectified hereafter. The wicked shall not always be confounded with their betters. *They shall not stand in the judgment*, either present intermediate judgments, or the final judgment of the great day. *And sinners*, the same persons under another name, as in v. 1, (*shall not stand*) *in the congregation*, or assembly, *of righteous (men.)* They shall not continue intermingled with them in society as now, and, what is more important, they shall not forever seem to form part of the church or chosen people, to which the word translated *congregation* is constantly applied in the Old Testament. Whatever doubt may now exist, the time is coming when the wicked are to take their proper place and to be seen in their true character, as totally unlike the righteous.

6. The certainty of this event is secured by God's omniscience, from which his power and his justice are inseparable. However men may be deceived in their prognostications, he is not. *The Lord*, Jehovah, the God of Revelation, the covenant God of Israel, *knows*, literally (*is*) *knowing*, i. e. habitually knows, or knows from the beginning to the end, *the way of righteous (men)*, i. e. the tendency and issue of their character and conduct. As if he had said, the Lord knows whither they are going and where they will arrive at last. This is a clear though indirect assertion of their safety, here and hereafter. The figure of a *way* is often used to express the character and conduct itself; but this idea is here implied or comprehended in that of destiny, as determined by the character and conduct. There is no need, therefore, of taking the verb *know* in any other than its usual and proper sense. The verse is an appeal to the divine omniscience for the truth of the implied assertion, that the righteous are safe and will be happy, as well as for that of the express assertion, with which the whole psalm closes. *The way of wicked (men,)* in the same sense as before, *shall perish*, i. e. end in ruin. The apparent solecism of making a



way perish only brings out in more prominent relief the truth really asserted, namely, the perdition of those who travel it. This completes the contrast, and sums up the description of the truly Happy Man, as one whose delight is in the law and his happiness in the favour of Jehovah, and whose strongest negative characteristic is his total want of moral likeness here to those from whom he is to dwell apart hereafter.

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## PSALM II.

A SUBLIME vision of the nations in revolt against Jehovah and his Anointed, with a declaration of the divine purpose to maintain his King's authority, and a warning to the world that it must bow to him or perish. The structure of this psalm is extremely regular. It naturally falls into four stanzas of three verses each. In the first, the conduct of the rebellious nations is described. In the second, God replies to them by word and deed. In the third, the Messiah or Anointed One declares the divine decree in relation to himself. In the fourth, the Psalmist exhorts the rulers of the nations to submission, with a threatening of divine wrath to the disobedient, and a closing benediction on believers. The several sentences are also very regular in form, exhibiting parallelisms of great uniformity. Little as this psalm may, at first sight, seem to resemble that before it, there is really a very strong affinity between them. Even in form they are related to each other. The number of verses and of stanzas is just double in the second, which moreover begins, as the first ends, with a threatening, and ends, as the

first begins, with a beatitude. There is also a resemblance in their subject and contents. The contrast indicated in the first is carried out and rendered more distinct in the second. The first is in fact an introduction to the second, and the second to what follows. And as the psalms which follow bear the name of David, there is the strongest reason to believe that these two are his likewise, a conclusion confirmed by the authority of Acts iv. 25, as well as by the internal character of the psalm itself. The imagery of the scene presented is evidently borrowed from the warlike and eventful times of David. He cannot, however, be himself the subject of the composition, the terms of which are wholly inappropriate to any king but the Messiah, to whom they are applied by the oldest Jewish writers, and again and again in the New Testament. This is the first of those prophetic psalms, in which the promise made to David, with respect to the Messiah (2 Sam. vii. 16. 1 Chr. xvii. 11—14), is wrought into the lyrical devotions of the ancient church. The supposition of a double reference to David, or some one of his successors, and to Christ, is not only needless and gratuitous, but hurtful to the sense by the confusion which it introduces, and forbidden by the utter inappropriateness of some of the expressions used to any lower subject. The style of this psalm, although not less pure and simple, is livelier than that of the first, a difference arising partly from the nature of the subject, but still more from the dramatic structure of the composition.

1. This psalm opens, like the first, with an exclamation, here expressive of astonishment and indignation at the wickedness and folly of the scene presented to the psalmist's view. *Why do nations make a noise*, tumultuate, or rage? The Hebrew verb is not expressive of an internal feeling, but of the outward agitation which denotes it. There may be an allusion to the roiling and roaring of the sea, often used as an emblem of popular commotion, both in the Scriptures and the classics. The

past tense of this verb (*why have they raged?*) refers to the commotion as already begun, while the future in the next clause expresses its continuance. *And peoples*, not *people* in the collective sense of persons, but in the proper plural sense of nations, races, *will imagine*, i. e. are imagining and will continue to imagine, *vanity*, a vain thing, something hopeless and impossible. The interrogation in this verse implies that no rational solution of the strange sight could be given, for reasons assigned in the remainder of the psalm. This implied charge of irrationality is equally well founded in all cases where the same kind of opposition exists, though secretly and on the smallest scale.

2. The confused scene presented in the first verse now becomes more distinct by a nearer view of the contending parties. (*Why will*) *the kings of earth set themselves*, or, without repeating the interrogation, *the kings of earth will set themselves*, or take their stand, *and rulers consult together*, literally sit together, but with special reference to taking counsel, as in Ps. xxxi. 14 (13), *against Jehovah and against his Anointed*, or *Messiah*, which is only a modified form of the Hebrew word here used, as *Christ* is a like modification of the corresponding term in Greek. External unction or anointing is a sign, in the Old Testament, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and especially of those conferred on prophets, priests, and kings, as ministers of the theocracy, and representatives of Christ himself. To kings particularly, as the highest and most comprehensive order, and peculiar types of Christ in his supremacy as Head of the Church, the sacred history applies the title of *the Lord's Anointed*. The rite of unction is explicitly recorded in the case of Saul, David, and Solomon, and was probably repeated at the coronation of their successors. From the verse before us, and from Dan. ix. 26, the name *Messiah* had, before the Advent, come into use among the Jews as a common designation of the

great Deliverer and King whom they expected. (Compare John i. 41 with v. 49 of the same chapter, and with Mark xv. 32.) The intimate relation of the Anointed One to God himself is indicated even here by making them the common object of attack or rather of revolt. In Acts iv. 25—27, this description is applied to the combination of Herod and Pilate, Jews and Gentiles, against Jesus Christ, not as the sole event predicted, but as that in which the gradual fulfilment reached its culmination. From that quotation, and indeed from the terms of the prophecy itself, we learn that *nations* here does not mean *gentiles* or *heathen* as opposed to *jews*, but whole communities or masses of mankind, as distinguished from mere personal or insulated cases of resistance and rebellion.

3. Having described the conduct of the disaffected nations and their chiefs, he now introduces them as speaking. In the preceding verse, they were seen, as it were, at a distance, taking counsel. Here they are brought so near to us, or we to them, that we can overhear their consultations. *Let us break their bands*, i. e. the bands of the Lord and his Anointed, the restraints imposed by their authority. The form of the Hebrew verb may be expressive either of a proposition or of a fixed determination. *We will break their bands*, we are resolved to do it. This is in fact involved in the other version, where *let us break* must not be understood as a faint or dubious suggestion, but as a summons to the execution of a formed and settled purpose. The same idea is expressed, with a slight modification, in the other clause. *And we will cast, or let us cast away from us their cords*, twisted ropes, a stronger term than *bands*. The verb, too, while it really implies the act of breaking, suggests the additional idea of contemptuous facility, as if they had said, let us fling away from us with scorn these feeble bands by which we have been hitherto confined. The application of this passage to the revolt of the Ammonites and

other conquered nations against David, or to any similar rebellion against any of the later Jewish kings, as the principal subject of this grand description, makes it quite ridiculous if not profane, and cannot therefore be consistent with the principles of sound interpretation. The utmost that can be conceded is that David borrowed the scenery of this dramatic exhibition from the wars and insurrections of his own eventful reign. The language of the rebels in the verse before us is a genuine expression of the feelings entertained, not only in the hearts of individual sinners, but by the masses of mankind, so far as they have been brought into collision with the sovereignty of God and Christ, not only at the time of his appearance upon earth, but in the ages both before and after that event, in which the prophecy, as we have seen, attained its height, but was not finally exhausted or fulfilled, since the same rash and hopeless opposition to the Lord and his Anointed still continues, and is likely to continue until the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, (Rev. xi. 15), an expression borrowed from this very passage.

4. As the first strophe or stanza of three verses is descriptive of the conduct of the rebels, so the next describes the corresponding action of their sovereign, in precisely the same order, telling first what he does (in vs. 4, 5), and then what he says (in v. 6), so that these two stanzas are not only regular in their internal structure but exactly fitted to each other. This symmetrical adjustment is entitled to attention, as that feature of the Hebrew poetry which fills the place of rhythm and metre in the poetry of other nations. At the same time it facilitates interpretation, when allowed to speak for itself without artificial or unnatural straining, by exhibiting the salient points of the passage in their true relation. The transition here is a sublime one, from the noise and agitation of earth to the safety and tranquillity of heaven. No shifting of the scene could be

more dramatic in effect or form. While the nations and their kings exhort each other to cast off their allegiance to Jehovah, and thereby virtually to dethrone him, he reposes far above them and beyond their reach. *Sitting in the heavens*, i. e. esident and reigning there, *he laughs* or will laugh. This figure, strong and almost startling as it is, cannot possibly be misunderstood by any reader, as a vivid expression of contemptuous security on God's part, and of impotent folly on the part of men. *At them* may be supplied from Ps. xxxvii. 13, and lix. 9 (8); but it is not necessary, and the picture is perhaps more perfect, if we understand the laughter here to be simply expressive of contempt, and the idea of directly *laughing at them* to be first suggested in the other clause. *The Lord*, not *Jehovah*, as in v. 2, but *Adhonai*, the Hebrew word properly denoting *Lord* or *Sovereign* as a divine title, *the Lord shall mock them*, or *mock at them*, as the strongest possible expression of contempt. This verse conveys in the most vivid manner, one indeed that would be inadmissible in any uninspired writer, the fatuity of all rebellious opposition to God's will. That such is often suffered to proceed long with impunity, is only, in the figurative language of this passage, because God first laughs at human folly and then smites it. "Who thought," says Luther, "when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" Beneath this bold anthropomorphism there is hidden a profound truth, namely, that to all superior beings, and above all to God himself, there is something in sin not only odious but absurd, something which cannot possibly escape the contempt of higher much less of the highest intelligence.

5. This contemptuous repose and seeming indifference shall not last forever. *Then*, after having thus derided them, *then*, as the next stage in this fearful process, *he will speak to them*, as they, after rising up against him, spoke to one another in v.



3. *And in his heat*, i. e. his hot displeasure, the wrath to which the laughter of v. 4 was but a prelude, *he will agitate them*, terrify them, make them quake with fear, not as a separate act from that described in the first clause, but by the very act of speaking to them in his anger, the words spoken being given in the following verse.

6. The divine address begins, as it were, in the middle of a sentence; but the clause suppressed is easily supplied, being tacitly involved in what precedes. As if he had said, you renounce your allegiance and assert your independence, *and I*, on my part, the pronoun when expressed in Hebrew being commonly emphatic, and here in strong antithesis to those who are addressed. *You pursue your course and I mine*. The translation *yet*, though inexact and arbitrary, brings out the antithesis correctly in a different form from that of the original. *And I have constituted*, or created, with allusion in the Hebrew to the casting of an image, or as some less probably suppose to unction, *I have constituted my King*, not simply a king, nor even *the king*, neither of which expressions would be adequate, but *my king*, one who is to reign for me and in indissoluble union with me, so that his reigning is identical with mine. This brings out still more clearly the intimate relation of the Anointed to Jehovah, which had been indicated less distinctly in v. 2, and thus prepares us for the full disclosure of their mutual relation in v. 7. *And I have constituted my King upon Zion, my hill of holiness*, or holy hill, i. e. consecrated, set apart, distinguished from all other hills and other places, as the seat of the theocracy, the royal residence, the capital city, of the Lord and of his Christ, from the time that David took up his abode, and deposited the ark there. The translation *over Zion* would convey the false idea, that Zion was itself the kingdom over which this sovereign was to reign, whereas it was only the visible and temporary centre of a

kingdom coextensive with the earth, as we expressly read in v. 8 below. This shows that the application of the verse before us to David himself, although intrinsically possible, is utterly at variance with the context and the whole scope of the composition.

7. We have here another of those changes which impart to this whole psalm a highly dramatic character. A third personage is introduced as speaking without any formal intimation in the text. As the first stanza (v. 1—3) closes with the words of the insurgents, and the second (v. 4—6) with the words of the Lord, so the third (vs. 7—9) contains the language of the king described in the preceding verse, announcing with his own lips the law or constitution of his kingdom. *I will declare*, or *let me declare*, the same form of the verb as in v. 3, *the decree*, the statute, the organic law or constitution of my kingdom. The Hebrew verb is followed by a preposition, which may be expressed in English, without any change of sense, by rendering the clause, *I will declare*, or make a declaration, i. e. a public, formal announcement, (*as*) *to the law* or constitution of my kingdom. This announcement is then made in a historical form, by reciting what had been said to the king at his inauguration or induction into office. *Jehovah said to me, My son (art) thou, this day have I begotten thee*. Whether this be regarded as a part of the decree or law itself, or as a mere preamble to it, the relation here described is evidently one which carried with it universal dominion as a necessary consequence, as well as one which justifies the use of the expression *my king* in v. 6. It must be something more than a figure for intense love or peculiar favour, something more than the filial relation which the theocratic kings, and Israel as a nation, bore to God. (Ex. iv. 22. Deut. xiv. 1, 2. xxxii. 6. Isai. lxiii. 16. Hos. xi. 1. Mal. i. 6. Rom. ix. 4.) Nor will any explanation of the terms fully meet the requisitions of the context except

one which supposes the relation here described as manifest in time to rest on one essential and eternal. This alone accounts for the identification of the persons as possessing a common interest, and reigning with and in each other. This profound sense of the passage is no more excluded by the phrase *this day*, implying something recent, than the universality of Christ's dominion is excluded by the local reference to Zion. The point of time, like the point of space, is the finite centre of an infinite circle. Besides, the mere form of the declaration is a part of the dramatic scenery or costume, with which the truth is here invested. The ideas of a king, a coronation, a hereditary succession, are all drawn from human and temporal associations. *This day have I begotten thee* may be considered therefore as referring only to the coronation of Messiah, which is an ideal one. The essential meaning of the phrase *I have begotten thee* is simply this, *I am thy father*. The antithesis is perfectly identical with that in 2 Sam. vii. 14, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." Had the same form of expression been used here, *this day am I thy father*, no reader would have understood *this day* as limiting the mutual relation of the parties, however it might limit to a certain point of time the formal recognition of it. It must also be observed, that even if *this day* be referred to the inception of the filial relation, it is thrown indefinitely back by the form of reminiscence or narration in the first clause of the verse. *Jehovah said to me*, but when? If understood to mean from everlasting or eternity, the form of expression would be perfectly in keeping with the other figurative forms by which the Scriptures represent things really ineffable in human language. The opinion that this passage is applied by Paul, in Acts xiii. 33, to Christ's resurrection, rests upon a misapprehension of the verb *raised up*, which has this specific meaning only when determined by the context or the addition of the words *from the dead*, as in the next verse of the same chapter, which is so far from requiring the more general

expressions of the preceding verse to be taken in the same sense, that it rather forbids such a construction, and shows that the two verses speak of different stages in the same great process, first the raising up of Jesus in the same sense in which God is said to have raised him up in Acts ii. 30. iii. 22, 26. vii. 36, i. e. bringing him into being as a man, and then the raising up from the dead, which the Apostle himself introduces as another topic in Acts xiii. 34. There is nothing, therefore, inconsistent with the statement that the Psalmist here speaks of eternal sonship, either in the passage just referred to, or in Heb v. 5, where the words are only cited to prove the solemn recognition of Christ's sonship, and his consequent authority, by God himself. This recognition was repeated, and, as it were, realized at our Saviour's baptism and transfiguration (Matth. iii. 17. xvii. 5), when a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him!"

8. The recital of Jehovah's declaration to his Son is still continued. *Ask of me and I will give nations (as) thy heritage*, i. e. thy portion as my son, *and (as) thy (permanent) possession*, from a verb denoting to hold fast, *the ends of the earth*, a common Old Testament expression for the whole earth, the remotest bounds and all that lies between them. The phrase is never applied to a particular country, and cannot therefore be explained of Palestine or David's conquests, without violently changing the sublime to the ridiculous. The only subject, who can be assumed and carried through without absurdity, is the Messiah, who, as the Son and heir of God, had a right to ask this vast inheritance. That he had asked it and received it, is implied in the dominion claimed for him in vs. 2 and 3, where the nations are represented in revolt against him as their rightful sovereign. It was to justify this claim that the divine decree is here recited, the constitution of Messiah's kingdom, in which its limits are defined as coextensive with the earth.

9. This extensive grant had been accompanied by that of power adequate to hold it. That power was to be exercised in wrath as well as mercy. The former is here rendered prominent, because the previous context has respect to audacious rebels, over whom Messiah is invested with the necessary power of punishment, and even of destruction. *Thou shalt break them with a rod (or sceptre) of iron*, as the hardest metal, and therefore the best suited to the use in question. By a slight change of pointing in the Hebrew, it may be made to mean, *thou shalt feed them* (as a shepherd) *with a rod of iron*, which is the sense expressed in several of the ancient versions, and to which there may be an ironical allusion, as the figure is a common one to represent the exercise of regal power. (See for example 2 Sam. vii. 7, and Micah vii. 14.) *Like a potter's vessel thou shalt shiver them*, or dash them in pieces, which last however weakens the expression by multiplying words. The idea suggested by the last comparison is that of easy and immediate destruction, perhaps with an implication of worthlessness in the object. This view of the Messiah as a destroyer is in perfect keeping with the New Testament doctrine, that those who reject Christ will incur an aggravated doom, and that Christ himself is in some sense the destroyer of those who will not let him be their Saviour, or, to borrow terms from one of his own parables, in strict agreement with the scene presented by the psalm before us, "those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) That false view of the divine nature which regards God as delighting in the death of the sinner, is more revolting but not more dangerous than that which looks upon his justice as extinguished by his mercy, and supposes that the death of Christ has rendered perdition impossible, even to those who will not believe in him. The terms of this verse are repeatedly applied to Christ in the Book of Revelation (ii. 27. xii. 5. xix. 15.)

10. The description having reached its height in the preceding verse, there is here a sudden change of manner, a transition to the tone of earnest admonition, still addressed, however, to the characters originally brought upon the scene. *And now (oh) kings*, after all that you have seen and heard, after this demonstration that you cannot escape from the dominion of Messiah, and that if you persist in your rebellion he will certainly destroy you, *be wise*, act wisely; *be warned*, be admonished of your danger and your duty, *(oh) judges of the earth!* A specific function of the regal office is here used as an equivalent or parallel to *kings* in the first clause, just as *rulers* is employed for the same purpose in v. 2. The change of tone in this last strophe shows that the previous exhibition of Messiah as invested with destroying power was, as it usually is in Scripture, only introductory to another aspect of the same great object, which becomes more clear and bright to the conclusion of the psalm. At the same time the original dramatic structure is maintained; for the speaker, in this closing stanza, is the Psalmist himself.

11. *Serve the Lord*, Jehovah, in the way that he requires, by acknowledging his Anointed as your rightful sovereign. *Serve the Lord with fear*, religious awe, not only on account of his tremendous majesty but also in view of his vindictory justice and destroying power. *And shout*, as a customary recognition of a present sovereign, *with trembling*, an external sign of fear, employed as an equivalent or parallel to fear itself. The word translated *shout* may also mean *rejoice*, as joy is often publicly expressed by acclamation. The sense will then be, *and rejoice with trembling*, i. e. exercise those mingled feelings which are suited to your present situation, in full view of God's wrath on one side, and his mercy on the other. This explanation agrees well with the transition, in these verses,



from the tone of terrible denunciation to that of friendly admonition and encouragement.

12. Lest the exhortation, in the preceding verse, should seem to have respect to Jehovah as an absolute sovereign, without reference to any other person, the attention is again called to his King, his Anointed, and his Son, as the sovereign to whom homage must be paid in order to escape destruction. *Kiss the Son*, an ancient mode of doing homage or allegiance to a king (1 Sam. x. 1), sometimes applied to the dress, and sometimes to the person, either of the sovereign or the subject himself. Even in modern European courts the kissing of the hand has this significance. In the case before us, there may possibly be an allusion to the kiss as a religious act among the heathen. (1 Kings xix. 18. Hos. xiii. 2. Job xxxi. 27.) *Kiss the Son*, the Son of God, the Messiah, so called by the Jews in Christ's time (John i. 50. Matth. xxvi. 63. Mark xiv. 61. Luke xxii. 70); do him homage, own him as your sovereign, *lest he be angry, and ye lose the way*, i. e. the way to happiness and heaven, as in Ps. i. 6, or *perish from the way*, which is the same thing in another form, or *perish by the way*, i. e. before you reach your destination. All these ideas are suggested by the Hebrew phrase, which is unusual. The necessity of prompt as well as humble submission is then urged. *For his wrath will soon burn, or be kindled*. The translation, "when his wrath is kindled but a little," does not yield so good a meaning, and requires two of the original expressions to be taken in a doubtful and unusual sense. The same view of the Messiah as a judge and an avenger, which appeared in v. 9, is again presented here, but only for a moment, and as a prelude to the closing beatitude or benediction. *Blessed (are) all*, oh the felicities of all, *those trusting him*, believing on him and confiding in him. This delightful contrast of salvation and perdition, at one and the same view, is characteristic of the Scriptures

and should teach us not to look ourselves, and not to turn the eyes of others, towards either of these objects without due regard to the other also. The resemblance in the language of this verse to that of Ps. i. 1 and 6, brings the two into connexion, as parts of one harmonious composition, or at least as kindred and contemporaneous products of a single mind, under the influence of one and the same Spirit.

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## PSALM III.

THIS Psalm contains a strong description of the enemies and dangers by which the writer was surrounded, and an equally strong expression of confidence that God would extricate him from them, with particular reference to former deliverances of the same kind. Its place in the collection does not seem to be fortuitous or arbitrary. It was probably among the first of David's lyrical compositions, the two which now precede it having been afterwards prefixed to the collection. In these three psalms there is a sensible gradation or progressive development of one great idea. The general contrast, which the first exhibits, of the righteous and the wicked, is reproduced, in the second, as a war against the Lord and his Anointed. In the third, it is still further individualized as a conflict between David, the great historical type of the Messiah, and his enemies. At the same time, the expressions are so chosen as to make the psalm appropriate to its main design, that of furnishing a vehicle of pious feeling to the church at large and to its individual mem

bers, in their own emergencies. The structure of the psalm is regular, consisting of four double verses, besides the title.

1. *A Psalm of David*, literally (*belonging*) to David, i. e. as the author. This is not a mere inscription, but a part of the text and inseparable from it, so far as we can trace its history. It was an ancient usage, both among classical and oriental writers, for the author to introduce his own name into the first sentence of his composition. The titles of the psalms ought, therefore, not to have been printed in a different type, or as something added to the text, which has led some editors to omit them altogether. In all Hebrew manuscripts they bear the same relation to the body of the Psalm, that the inscriptions in the Prophets or in Paul's epistles bear to the substance of the composition. In the case before us, as in every other, the inscription is in perfect keeping with the psalm itself, as well as with the parallel history. Besides the author's name, it here states the historical occasion of the composition. *A Psalm of David, in his fleeing*, when he fled, *from the face*, from the presence, or before, *Absalom his son*. (See 2 Sam. xv. 14, 17, 30.) Such a psalm might well be conceived, and even composed, if not actually written, in the midst of the dangers and distresses which occasioned it. There is no need therefore of supposing the reference to be merely retrospective. That the terms used are so general, is because the psalm, though first suggested by the writer's personal experience, was intended for more general use.

2 (1). *Oh Lord*, Jehovah, the name of God as self-existent and eternal, and also as the covenant God of Israel, *how many*, or *how multiplied*, *are my foes*, my oppressors or tormentors! This is not a question, but an exclamation of surprise and grief. *Many rising up against me*. The sentence may either be completed thus: many (are they) that rise up against me; or

the construction of the other clause may be continued. (*How*) *many (are there) rising up against me!* The same periphrasis for *enemies* is used by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 7. What is here said of the multitude of enemies agrees well with the historical statement in 2 Sam. xv. 13. xvi. 18.

3 (2). (*There are*) *many saying*, or, (*how*) *many (are there) saying, to my soul*, i. e. so as to affect my heart, though really said of him, not directly addressed to him. (Compare Ps. xxxv. 3. Isai. li. 23.) *There is no salvation*, deliverance from evil, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal. *There is no salvation for him*, the sufferer, and primarily the psalmist himself, *in God*, i. e. in his power, or his purpose, implying either that God does not concern himself about such things, Ps. x. 11, or that he has cast the sufferer off, Ps. xlii. 4, 11 (3, 10). lxxi. 11. xxii. 8, 9. (7, 8). Matth. xxvii. 43. This is the language, not of despondent friends, but of malignant enemies, and is really the worst that even such could say of him. For, as Luther well says, all the temptations in the world, and in hell too, melted together into one, are nothing when compared with the temptation to despair of God's mercy.—The first stanza, or double verse, closes, like the second and fourth, with the word *Selah*. This term occurs seventy-three times in the Psalms and three times in the prophecy of Habakkuk. It corresponds to *rest*, either as a noun or verb, and like it is properly a musical term, but generally indicates a pause in the sense as well as the performance. See below, on Ps. ix. 17 (16). Like the titles, it invariably forms part of the text, and its omission by some editors and translators is a mutilation of the word of God. In the case before us, it serves as a kind of pious ejaculation to express the writer's feelings, and at the same time warns the reader to reflect on what he reads, just as our Saviour was accustomed to say. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

4 (3). From his earthly enemies and dangers he looks up to God, the source of his honours and his tried protector. The connexion is similar to that between the fifth and sixth verses of the second psalm. The *and* (not *but*) has reference to a tacit comparison or contrast. This is my treatment at the hands of men, *and thou*, on the other hand, *oh Lord*, Jehovah, (*art*) *a shield about me*, or around me, i. e. covering my whole body, not merely a part of it, as ordinary shields do. This is a favourite metaphor with David; see Ps. vii. 11 (10). xviii. 3 (2). xxviii. 7. It occurs, however, more than once in the Pentateuch. See Gen. xv. 1. Deut. xxxiii. 29.—*My honour*, i. e. the source of the honours I enjoy, with particular reference, no doubt, to his royal dignity, not as a secular distinction merely, but in connexion with the honour put upon him, as a type and representative of Christ. The honour thus bestowed by God he might well be expected to protect. *My honour, and the (one) raising my head*, i. e. making me look up from my despondency. The whole verse is an appeal to the Psalmist's previous experience of God's goodness, as a ground for the confidence afterwards expressed.

5 (4). (*With*) *my voice to the Lord*, Jehovah, *I will call*, or *cry*. The future form of the verb is probably intended to express continued or habitual action, as in Ps. i. 2. I cry and will cry still. *And he hears me*, or, *then he hears me*, i. e. when I call. The original construction shows, in a peculiar manner, the dependence of the last verb on the first, which can hardly be conveyed by an exact translation. The second verb is not the usual verb to hear, but one especially appropriated to the gracious hearing or answering of prayer. *And he hears (or answers) me from his hill of holiness*, or *holy hill*. This, as we learn from Ps. ii. 6, is Zion, the seat and centre of the old theocracy, the place where God visibly dwelt among his people. This designation of a certain spot as the earthly resi-

dence of God, was superseded by the incarnation of his Son, whose person thenceforth took the place of the old sanctuary. It was, therefore, no play upon words or fanciful allusion, when our Saviour "spoke of the temple of his body" (John ii. 21), but a disclosure of the true sense of the sanctuary under the old system, as designed to teach the doctrine of God's dwelling with his people. The same confidence with which the Christian now looks to God in Christ the old believer felt towards the holy hill of Zion. Here again the strophe ends with a devout and meditative pause, denoted as before by *Selah*.

6 (5). *I, even I, whose case you regarded as so desperate, have lain down, and slept, (and) awaked*, notwithstanding all these dangers, *for the Lord, Jehovah, will sustain me*, and I therefore have no fears to rob me of my sleep. This last clause is not a reason for the safety he enjoys, which would require the past tense, but for his freedom from anxiety, in reference to which the future is entirely appropriate. This construction, the only one which gives the Hebrew words their strict and full sense, forbids the supposition that the Psalm before us was an evening song, composed on the night of David's flight from Jerusalem. If any such distinctions be admissible or necessary, it may be regarded as a morning rather than an evening hymn.

7 (6). The fearlessness implied in the preceding verse is here expressed. *I will not be afraid of myriads, or multitudes*, the Hebrew word being used both in a definite and vague sense. It also contains an allusion to the first verb in v. 2 (1), of which it is a derivative. *I will not be afraid of myriads of people*, either in the sense of persons, men, or by a poetic license for *the people*, i. e. Israel, the great mass of whom had now revolted. *Whom they, my enemies, have set, or posted, round about against me*. This is a simpler and more accurate



construction than the reflexive one, *who have set (themselves) against me round about*, although the essential meaning still remains the same. The sum of the whole verse is, that the same courage, which enabled him to sleep without disturbance in the midst of enemies and dangers, still sustained him when those enemies and dangers were presented to his waking senses.

8 (7). That this courage was not founded upon self-reliance, he now shows by asking God for that which he before expressed his sure hope of obtaining. *Arise, oh Lord, Jehovah!* This is a common scriptural mode of calling upon God to manifest his presence and his power, either in wrath or favour. By a natural anthropomorphism, it describes the intervals of such manifestations as periods of inaction or of slumber, out of which he is besought to rouse himself. *Save me, even me, of whom they say, there is no help for him in God.* See above, v. 3 (2). *Save me, oh my God*, mine by covenant and mutual engagement, to whom I therefore have a right to look for deliverance and protection. This confidence is warranted moreover by experience. *For thou hast*, in former exigencies, *smitten all my enemies*, without exception, (*on the*) *cheek or jaw*, an act at once violent and insulting. See 1 Kings xxii. 24. Micah iv. 14 (v. 1.) Lam. iii. 30. *The teeth of the wicked*, here identified with his enemies, because he was the champion and representative of God's cause, *thou hast broken*, and thus rendered harmless. The image present to his mind seems to be that of wild beasts eager to devour him, under which form his enemies are represented in Ps. xxvii. 2.

9 (8). *To the Lord, Jehovah, the salvation*, which I need and hope for, is or belongs, as to its only author and dispenser. To him therefore he appeals for the bestowment of it, not on himself alone, but on the church of which he was the visible

and temporary head. *On thy people (be) thy blessing!* This earnest and disinterested intercession for God's people forms a noble close or winding up of the whole psalm, and is therefore preferable to the version, *on thy people (is) thy blessing*, which, though equally grammatical, is less significant, and indeed little more than a repetition of the fact asserted in the first clause, whereas this is really an importunate petition founded on it. The whole closes, like the first and second stanzas, with a solemn and devout pause. SELAH.

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## PSALM IV.

THE Psalmist prays God to deliver him from present as from past distresses, v. 2 (1.) He assures the haters of his regal dignity, that God bestowed it and will certainly protect it, vs. 3, 4 (2, 3.) He exhorts them to quiet submission, righteousness, and trust in God, vs. 5, 6 (4, 5.) He contrasts his own satisfaction, springing from such trust, with the hopeless disquietude of others, even in the midst of their enjoyments, vs. 7, 8 (6, 7.) He closes with an exquisite proof of his tranquillity by falling asleep, as it were, before us, under the divine protection, v. 9 (8.) The resemblance of the last verse to v. 6 (5) of the preceding psalm, together with the general similarity of structure, shows that, like the first and second, they were meant to form a pair or double psalm. For the reasons given in explaining Ps. iii. 6 (5), the third may be described as a morning and the fourth as an evening psalm. The historical occasion is of course the same in both, though mentioned only in the title of the third,

while the musical directions are given in the title of the fourth. The absence of personal and local allusions is explained by the object of the composition, which was not to express private feelings merely, but to furnish a vehicle of pious sentiment for other sufferers and the church at large.

1. *To the chief musician*, literally the *overseer* or *superintendent*, of any work or labour (2 Chron. ii. 1, 17. xxxiv. 12), and of the temple music in particular (1 Chron. xv. 21.) The psalm is described as *belonging to him*, as the performer, or as intended *for him*, to be given *to him*. This shows that it was written for the use of the ancient church, and not for any merely private purpose. That this direction was not added by a later hand, is clear from the fact that it never appears in the latest psalms. The same formula occurs at the beginning of fifty-three psalms, and at the close of the one in the third chapter of Habakkuk. A more specific musical direction follows. *In, on or with, stringed instruments*. This may either qualify *chief musician*, as denoting the leader in that particular style of performance, or direct him to perform this particular psalm with that kind of accompaniment. *A psalm to David*, i. e. belonging to him as the author, just as it belonged *to the chief musician*, as the performer. The original expression is the same in both cases. *Of David* conveys the sense correctly, but is rather a paraphrase than a translation.

2 (1). The psalm opens with a prayer for deliverance founded on previous experience of God's mercy. *In my calling*, when I call, *hear me*, in the pregnant sense of hearing favourably, hear and answer me, grant me what I ask. *Oh my God of righteousness*, my righteous God! Compare *my hill of holiness*, Ps. ii. 6, and *his hill of holiness*, Ps. iii. 5 (4). The appeal to God, as a God of righteousness, implies the justice of the Psalmist's cause, and shows that he asks nothing incon-

sistent with God's holiness. The same rule should govern all our prayers, which must be impious if they ask God to deny himself. The mercy here asked is no new or untried favour. It is because he has experienced it before that he dares to ask it now. *In the pressure*, or confinement, a common figure for distress, which I have heretofore experienced, *thou hast widened*, or made room, *for me*, the corresponding figure for relief. All he asks is that this may be repeated. *Have mercy upon me*, or *be gracious unto me*, now as in former times, *and hear my prayer*. This appeal to former mercies, as a ground for claiming new ones, is characteristic of the Bible and of true religion. Among men, past favours may forbid all further expectations; but no such rule applies to the Divine compassions. The more we draw from this source, the more copious and exhaustless it becomes.

3 (2). *Sons of man!* In Hebrew, as in Greek, Latin, and German, there are two words answering to *man*, one generic and the other specific. When placed in opposition to each other, they denote men of high and low degree, as in Ps. xlix. 3 (2.) lxii. 10 (9.) Prov. viii. 4. It seems better, therefore, to give the phrase here used its emphatic sense, as signifying men of note or eminence, rather than the vague one of men in general or human beings. This agrees moreover with the probable occasion of this psalm, viz. the rebellion of Absalom, in which the leading men of Israel were involved. *To what (time)*, i. e. how long, or *to what (point)*, degree, of wickedness; most probably the former. *How long (shall) my honour*, not merely personal but official, *(be) for shame*, i. e. be so accounted, or *(be converted) into shame*, by my humiliation? David never loses sight of his religious dignity, as a theocratical king and a type of the Messiah, or of the insults offered to the latter in his person. The question, *how long?* implies that it had lasted long enough, nay too long, even when it first began, in other

words that it was wrong from the beginning. (*How long*) *will ye love vanity*, or a vain thing, in the sense both of a foolish hopeless undertaking, and of something morally defective or worthless. The same word is used above in reference to the insurrection of the nations against God and Christ (Ps. ii. 1). (*How long*) *will ye seek a lie*, i. e. seek to realize a vain imagination or to verify a false pretension, with particular reference perhaps to the deceitful policy of Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 4, 7.) As the *love* of the first clause denotes the bent of their affections, so the *seek* of this clause signifies the acting out of their internal dispositions. Compare Ps. xxxiv. 15 (14) and Zeph. ii. 3. The feeling of indignant surprise, implied in the interrogation, is expressed still further by a solemn pause. *Selah*. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2). The position of this word, here and in v. 5 (4) below, seems to forbid the division of the psalm into strophes or stanzas of equal length.

4 (3). The pause at the close of the preceding verse expresses feeling. The connexion of the verses, as to sense, is as intimate as possible. The *and* at the beginning of the verse before us has reference to the exhortation implied in the foregoing question. (See above, on Ps. ii. 6.) Cease to love vanity and seek a lie, *and know*, be assured, *that the Lord, Jehovah, hath set apart*, the same verb used to signify the segregation of Israel from the rest of men (Ex. viii. 18. ix. 4. xi. 7. xxxiii. 16), here applied to the designation of an individual to the highest theocratical dignity. *The Lord hath set apart for himself*, for his own service, the execution of his own plans, and the promotion of his own honour. It was not therefore an attack on David, but on God himself and the Messiah whom he represented. The Hebrew word חָסֵד, derived from חָסַד, love to God or man, may either signify an object of the divine mercy, or one actuated by religious love. If both ideas are included, which is altogether probable, neither

*godly* nor any other single word in English is an adequate translation. The predominant idea seems to be the passive one, so that the words are not so much descriptive of religious character as of divine choice: and know that the Lord hath set apart for the accomplishment of his own purpose one selected in his sovereign mercy for that purpose. This is mentioned as a proof that their hostility was vain, and that the prayer of v. 2 (1) would certainly be heard and answered. This followed as a necessary consequence from the relation which the Psalmist bore to God, not only as a godly man, but as a theocratic sovereign. *The Lord, Jehovah, will hear, in my calling*, when I call, *unto him*. The terms of the opening petition are here studiously repeated, so as to connect the prayer itself with the expression of assured hope that it will be answered.

5 (4). The address to his enemies is still continued, but merely as a vehicle of truth and his own feelings. *Rage and sin not*, i. e. do not sin by raging, as you have done, against me, the Lord's Anointed, and indirectly therefore against himself. This construction of the Hebrew words, though not the most obvious or agreeable to usage, agrees best with the context and with the Septuagint version, adopted by Paul in Ephesians iv. 26, where the precept, *be ye angry and sin not*, seems to be a positive prohibition of anger, i. e. of its wilful continuance, as appears from what the Apostle adds, perhaps in allusion to the last clause of the verse before us. Some, it is true, have understood Paul as meaning, be angry upon just occasions, but be careful not to sin by groundless anger or excess. But even if this be the sense of the words there, it is entirely inappropriate here, where the anger of the enemies was altogether sinful, and they could not therefore be exhorted to indulge it. There is still another meaning which the Hebrew words will bear. The verb strictly means to be violently moved with any



passion or emotion, whether anger (Prov. xix. 9), grief (2 Sam. xviii. 33), or fear (Isai. xxxii. 11.) It might therefore be translated here, *tremble*, stand in awe, *and sin not*. But this, although it yields a good sense, cuts off all connexion between David's words and those of Paul, and makes the explanation of the latter still more difficult. The English word *rage* not only conveys the sense of the original correctly, but is probably connected with it in its etymology.—The command to cease from raging against God and his Anointed is still further carried out in the next clause. *Say in your heart*, to yourselves, and not aloud, much less with clamour, what you have to say. The Hebrew verb does not mean to *speake* but to *say*, and, like this English word, is always followed by the words spoken, except in a few cases where they can be instantly supplied from the context. E. g. Ex. xix. 25, "So Moses went unto the people and *said* (not *spake*) to them" what God had just commanded him. Gen. iv. 8, "And Cain *said* to Abel his brother (not *talked with* him)," let us go into the field, as appears from what immediately follows. Compare 2 Chron. ii. 10 (11.) It might here be rendered, *say (so) in your heart*, i. e. say we will no longer sin by raging against David; but the other is more natural, and agrees better with what follows. *Say* (what you do say) *in your heart, upon your bed*, i. e. in the silence of the night, often spoken of in Scripture as the season of reflection (Eph. iv. 26), *and be still*, be silent, implying repentance and submission to authority. The effect of this exhortation to be still is beautifully strengthened by a pause in the performance. *Selah*.

6 (5). Before his enemies can be successful they must have a fear of God and a faith, of which they are entirely destitute. This confirmation of the Psalmist's hopes is clothed in the form of an exhortation to his enemies. *Offer offerings*, or sacrifice sacrifices, *of righteousness*, i. e. righteous sacrifices

prompted by a right motive, and implying a correct view of the divine nature. There may be an allusion to the hypocritical services of Absalom, and especially his pretended vow (2 Sam. xv 7, 8.) The form of expression here is borrowed from Deut. xxxiii. 19. As an indispensable prerequisite to such a service, he particularly mentions faith. *And trust in the Lord*, Jehovah, not in any human help or temporal advantages.

7 (6). *Many (there are) saying, Who will show us good?* This may be an allusion to the anxious fears of his companions in misfortune, but is more probably a picture of the disquiet and unsatisfied desire arising from the want of faith and righteousness described in the foregoing verse. Of all who do not trust in God it may be said, that they are continually asking *who will show us good*, who will show us wherein happiness consists, and how we may obtain it? In contrast with this restlessness of hope or of despair, he shows his own acquaintance with the true source of tranquillity by a petition founded on the ancient and authoritative form in which the High Priest was required to bless the people (Num. vi. 24—26.) “The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.” Two of these solemn benedictions are here mingled in a prayer. *Lift upon us the light of thy countenance, oh Lord*, Jehovah! The light of the countenance is a favourite figure in the Psalms, for a favourable aspect or expression. See Ps. xxxi. 17 (16.) xlv. 4 (3). lxxx. 4 (3.) The lifting up may have reference to the rising of the sun, or be put in opposition to the act of looking down or away from any object, as a token of aversion or displeasure. *Upon us* extends the prayer to his companions in misfortune, or to all God’s people, or to men in general, as if he had said, this is the only hope of our lost race. The plural

form may be compared with those in the Lord's Prayer, as indicating the expansive comprehensive spirit of true piety.

8 (7). The faith, of which his enemies were destitute, he possessed in such a measure, that the mere anticipation of God's favour made him happier, in the midst of his distresses, than his foes in the actual possession of their temporal advantages. *Thou hast given gladness in my heart*, not to my heart, but to me in my heart, i. e. a real, inward, heartfelt gladness, *more than the time*, or more than when, i. e. more than they ever enjoyed when, *their corn and their wine abounded*, or increased. The original nouns properly denote the new corn and wine of the passing year, the fresh fruits of the field and vineyard. The reference may be either to the proverbial joy of harvest and of vintage, or to the abundant stores of David's enemies contrasted with his own condition when dependent on a faithful servant for subsistence (2 Sam. xvi. 1, 2.)

9 (8). With this faith in the divine protection, he has nothing even to disturb his rest. *In peace*, tranquillity, composure, *at once*, or at the same time, by the same act, *I will lie down and will sleep*, or rather go to sleep, fall asleep, which is the meaning of the Hebrew verb in Gen. ii. 21. xli. 5. 1 Kings xix. 5, and elsewhere. Nothing could be more natural and beautiful, as a description of complete tranquillity, than this trait borrowed from the physical habits of the young, the healthy, and those free from all anxiety, to whom the act of lying down and that of sleeping are almost coincident. The ground of this security is given in the last clause. *For thou, Lord, Jehovah, alone in safety*, or security, *wilt make me dwell*. The future form, though not exclusive of the present (see above, on Ps. i. 2), should be retained because it indicates the Psalmist's assured hope of something not yet realized, and

is thus in perfect keeping with v. 8 (7.)—*Alone* may be connected with what goes before: for thou Lord, and no other, thou, even though all other friends and advantages should fail me, art sufficient to protect me and provide for me. Or it may be connected with what follows: *alone, in safety, thou wilt make me dwell*. There is then an allusion to the repeated application of the same Hebrew word to Israel as dwelling apart from other nations under God's protection and in the enjoyment of his favour. See Num. xxiii. 9. Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29, and compare Micah vii. 14. Jer. xlix. 31. Deut. iv. 7, 8. 2 Sam. vii. 23. What was originally said of the people is then transferred, as in v. 4 (3) above, to David, not as a private member of the ancient church, however excellent, but as its theocratic head and representative, in whom, as afterwards more perfectly in Christ, the promises to Israel were verified and realized. This last interpretation of *alone* is so striking, and agrees so well with the other allusions in this context to the Pentateuch, e. g. to Lev. xxv. 18, 19, and Deut. xxxiii. 12 in this verse, and to Num. vi. 24—26 in v. 7 (6), that some combine the two constructions, and suppose *alone* to have a kind of double sense, as if he had said, thou alone wilt make me dwell alone.—Although the form of this verse has respect to the particular historical occasion of the psalm, the sentiment is so expressed as to admit of an unforced application to the case of every suffering believer, and to the distresses of the church at large, for whose use it **was not only left on record but originally written.**

## PSALM V.

THE Psalmist prays for the divine help, v. 2 (1), on the ground that Jehovah is his King and his God, v. 3 (2), that he early and constantly invokes his aid, v. 4 (3), that the enemies, from whom he seeks to be delivered, are the enemies of God, vs. 5, 6 (4, 5), and as such must inevitably perish, v. 7 (6), while he, as the representative of God's friends, must be rescued, v. 8 (7). He then goes over the same ground afresh, asking again to be protected from his enemies, v. 9 (8), again describing them as desperately wicked, v. 10 (9), again appealing to God's justice to destroy them, v. 11 (10), and again anticipating certain triumph, v. 12 (11), on the ground of God's habitual and uniform dealing with the righteous, v. 13 (12). As the two preceding psalms appeared to constitute a pair, so this one seems to contain such a pair or double psalm within itself. It is also obvious, that this is but a further variation of the theme which runs through the preceding psalms, and therefore an additional proof that their arrangement in the book is not fortuitous or arbitrary. If v. 4 (3) of this psalm be supposed to mark it as a morning hymn, its affinity to the two before it becomes still more close and striking.

1. *To (or for) the Chief Musician.* See above, on Ps. iv.
1. *To (or for) Nehiloth.* This, though undoubtedly a part of the original inscription, is obscure and enigmatical. Its very obscurity indeed may be regarded as a proof of its antiquity and genuineness. Some understand it to mean *flutes*, or wind-instruments in general, as *Neginoth*, in the title of the

fourth psalm, means stringed instruments. The sense would then be : (to be sung) to (an accompaniment of) flutes or wind-instruments. But as the Hebrew word is nowhere else used in this sense, and the preposition here employed is not the one prefixed to names of instruments, and flutes are nowhere mentioned as a part of the temple music, others make *Nehiloth* the name of a tune, or of another song to the melody of which this was to be adapted : (to be sung) to (the air of) *Nehiloth*. Others follow the ancient versions in making it refer, not to the musical performance, but the subject of the psalm : (as) to inheritances, lots, or destinies, viz. those of the righteous and the wicked. This is favoured by the circumstance, that most of the other enigmatical inscriptions of the psalms may be more probably explained as having reference to their theme or subject than in any other manner.—The title closes, as in the foregoing psalm, by ascribing it to *David*, as its author. Nor is there any thing, as we shall see, to militate against the truth of this inscription.

2 (1). *To my words, oh Lord, Jehovah, give ear, perceive my thought.* Attend not only to my vocal and audible petitions, but to my unexpressed desires, to those “groanings which cannot be uttered,” but are no less significant to God than language. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) The second verb suggests the idea of attention, as well as that of simple apprehension

3 (2). *Hearken to the voice of my crying,* or my cry for help, to which the Hebrew word is always specially applied. *My king and my God*, not as a mere creator and providential ruler, but as the covenant God and king of Israel, whom David represented. As he was himself the king of Israel, so God was his king, the lord paramount or sovereign, in whose right he reigned. This address involves a reason why his prayer must be heard God, as the king of his people, could not deny



them his protection, and they asked no other. *For to thee, and thee only, will I pray.* As if he had said: it is in this capacity that I invoke thee, and I therefore must be heard. This is a specimen of that *παρρησία*, or freedom of speech towards God, which is recognized as an effect and evidence of faith, in the New as well as the Old Testament. Heb. iv. 16. x. 19. 35. 1 John ii. 28. iii. 21. iv. 17. v. 14.

4 (3). *Oh Lord, Jehovah, (in) the morning thou shalt hear my voice.* This is not so much a request to be heard as a resolution to persist in prayer. The reference may be either to stated hours of prayer or to early devotion as a proof of earnestness and faith. See Ps. lv. 18 (17.) lxxxviii. 14 (13). *(In) the morning I will set (my prayer) in order, to (or for) thee.* There is here a beautiful allusion to the Mosaic ritual, which is unavoidably lost in a translation. The Hebrew verb is the technical term used in the Old Testament to signify the act of arranging the wood upon the altar (Gen. xxii. 9. Lev. i. 7. 1 Kings xviii. 33) and the shewbread on the table (Exod. xl. 23. Lev. xxiv. 6, 8.) It would therefore necessarily suggest the idea of prayer as an oblation, here described as a kind of morning sacrifice to God. *And I will look out, or watch, for an answer to my prayers.* The image presented is that of one looking from a wall or tower in anxious expectation of approaching succour. A similar use of the same verb occurs in Hab. ii. 1 and Micah vii. 7. True faith is not contented with the act of supplication, but displays itself in eager expectation of an answer.

5 (4.) Here, as elsewhere, the Psalmist identifies his cause with God's, and anticipates the downfall of his enemies because they are sinners and therefore odious in God's sight. *For not a God delighting in wickedness (art) thou,* as might appear to be the case if these should go unpunished. It is necessary

therefore, for the divine honour, that they should not go unpunished. *Not with thee, as thy guest or friend, shall evil, or the bad (man), dwell.* For an opposite use of the same figure, see below, Ps. xv. 1. lxi. 5 (4.) It is still implied, that the impunity of sinners would appear as if God harboured and abetted them, and therefore must be inconsistent with his honour as a holy God.

6 (5). What was said in the preceding verse of sin is here, to prevent misapprehension, said of sinners. *They shall not stand, the proud, or insolent,* here put for wicked men in general and for the Psalmist's enemies in particular, *before thine eyes.* Thou canst not bear the presence of thy moral opposites. Sin is not only opposed to God's will, but repugnant to his nature. By ceasing to hate it, he would cease to be holy, cease to be perfect, cease to be God. This idea is expressed more directly in the other clause. *Thou hast hated,* and must still hate, *all doers of iniquity.* This last word is originally a negative, meaning inanity or nonentity, but like several other negatives in Hebrew, is employed as a strong term to denote moral deficiency and worthlessness.

7 (6.) As the preceding verse extends what was said of sin in the abstract to personal offenders, so here what was said of the divine dispositions is applied to divine acts. That which God hates he must destroy. Particular classes of transgressors are here put, as before, by way of specimen or sample, for the whole; with special reference, however, to the sins of David's enemies. *Thou wilt destroy speakers of falsehood;* see above, on Ps. iv. 3 (2.) *A man of blood,* literally *bloods*, the plural form being commonly used where there is reference to blood-guiltiness or murder. See Gen. iv. 10, 11. Ps. li. 16 (14.) *A man of blood and fraud,* a bloody and deceitful man, *the Lord, Jehovah, will abhor;* he must and will show his abhor-

rence by the punishment of such offenders. This confident anticipation of God's righteous retributions really involves a prayer for the deliverance of the Psalmist from his enemies.

8 (7.) For the same reason he is equally confident in the anticipation of his own deliverance. Since his enemies must perish as the enemies of God, he must escape, not on account of his own merit, nor simply as an object of God's favour, but as the champion of his cause, his earthly vicegerent, the type and representative of his Messiah. *And I*, as distinguished from these sinners, *in the abundance of thy mercy*, which excludes all reliance on his own strength or goodness, *will come to thy house*, the tabernacle set up on Mount Zion by David. *I will worship*, literally prostrate or bow myself, *towards thy temple of holiness*, thy holy temple, or rather palace, so called as the residence of Israel's divine king, and therefore no less applicable to the tabernacle than the temple. See 1 Sam. i. 9. iii. 3. Ps. xxvii. 4. xxviii. 2. *Towards*, not *in*, because the worshippers did not go into the sanctuary itself, but worshipped in the court, with their faces turned towards the place of God's manifested presence. Such usages are now superseded by the advent of the true sanctuary. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4.) *In thy fear*, the reverence engendered even by the view and the experience of God's mercy. There may be an allusion in this verse to David's painful sense of his exclusion from the house of God (2 Sam. xv. 25); but it cannot be merely an anticipation of renewed access to the sanctuary, which was equally open to all others, and could not therefore be used to indicate the contrast between his condition and that of others. The verse is rather an engagement to acknowledge God's delivering mercy in the customary manner. See below, Ps. lxvi. 13. As if he had said: while my enemies perish by the hand of God, I shall be brought by his mercy to give thanks for my deliverance at his sanctuary.

9 (8.) The Psalmist here begins his prayer and argument anew, pursuing the same order as before. *Oh Lord, Jehovah, lead me, guide me safely, in thy righteousness*, i. e. in the exercise of that same justice which destroys my enemies, *on account of my enemies*, that they may not triumph; *make straight before my face thy way*, i. e. mark out a safe and easy path for me to tread. The explanation of the *way* as that of duty and obedience, although not at variance with scriptural usage, is less suited to the context here, in which the prayer throughout is for protection and deliverance

10 (9.) The same reason as before is now assigned for his deliverance from his enemies, viz. because they were the enemies of God, and they were such because they were atrocious sinners. *For there is nothing in his mouth*, i. e. the mouth of any one of them, or of all concentrated in one ideal person, *sure or certain*, i. e. true. *Their inside*, their heart, their real disposition, as distinguished from the outward appearance, *(is) mischiefs*, injuries, or crimes, consists of nothing else. *A grave opened*, to receive the victim, *(is) their throat*, like that of a devouring monster. Or the throat may be mentioned as an organ of speech, as in Ps. cxlix. 6. cxv. 7, and compared with the grave as a receptacle of corruption or a place of destruction. *Their tongue they smooth, or make smooth*, by hypocrisy or flattery, as the wicked woman is said to *make her words smooth*, Prov. ii. 16. vii. 5. The Septuagint version of this clause is quoted by Paul (Rom. iii. 13), with several other passages from the Old Testament, as a strong description of human depravity. The last words are rendered in that version, ‘with their tongues they have used craft or deceit,’ an idea really included in the literal translation.

11 (10.) *Condemn them*, literally *make them guilty*, i. e. recognize and treat them as such, *oh God! They shall fall*, i. e.

they must, they cannot but fall, a common figure for destruction (Ps. xxxvi. 13. cxli. 10), *from their plans*, i. e. before they can accomplish them, or in consequence, by means of them. (Compare Hos. xi. 6.) *In the fullness*, or abundance, *of their sins, thrust them forth*, cast them out from thy presence, and down from their present exaltation. *For they have rebelled against thee*, not me, or against me only as thy instrument and representative. Or the opposition may be between rebelling against God and simply sinning against man. The imperative and future forms, in this verse, both express the certainty of the event, with an implication of approving acquiescence. Such expressions, in the Psalms, have never really excited or encouraged a spirit of revenge in any reader, and are no more fitted to have that effect than the act of a judge who condemns a criminal to death or of the officer who executes the sentence. The objections often urged against such passages are not natural, but spring from over-refinement and a false view of the Psalms as expressions of mere personal feeling. See below, on Ps. vii. 13 (12.)

12 (11.) The transition and contrast are the same as in v. 8 (7) above. While the wicked perish, the righteous shall have cause for everlasting joy. *And all (those) trusting in thee*, making thee their refuge, *shall be glad; forever shall they shout (or sing) for joy, and* (not without cause, for) *thou wilt cover over (or protect) them; and in thee*, in thy presence and thy favour, *shall exult, or triumph, (the) lovers of thy name*, i. e. of thy manifested excellence, which is the usual sense of this expression in the Old Testament. The believers and lovers of God's name, here spoken of, are not merely friends of the Psalmist who rejoice in his deliverance, but the great congregation of God's people, to which he belonged, and of which he was the representative, so that his deliverance was theirs, and

a rational occasion of their joy, not only on his account but on their own

13 (12.) The confident hope expressed in the foregoing verse was not a groundless or capricious one, but founded on the nature of God and the uniform tenor of his dispensations. The Psalmist knows what God will do in this case, because he knows what he does and will do still in general. *For thou wilt bless*, and art wont to bless, *the righteous*, the opposite of those described in vs. 5—7 (4—6) and 10, 11 (9, 10), *oh Lord Jehovah!* *Like the shield*, as the shield protects the soldier (*so with*) *favour thou wilt surround him*, or *enclose him*, still referring to the righteous. See the same comparison in Ps. iii. 4 (3.) The confident assertion that God will do so, implies that he has done so, and is wont to do so, to the righteous as a class. And this affords a reasonable ground for the belief, expressed in the preceding verse, that he will do so also in the present case.

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## PSALM VI.

THE Psalmist prays for the removal of God's chastisements, v. 2 (1), because they have already brought him very low, vs. 3, 4 (2, 3), because the divine glory will be promoted by his rescue, v. 5 (4), and obscured by his destruction, v. 6 (5), and because, unless speedily relieved, he can no longer bear up under his sufferings, vs. 7, 8 (6, 7.) He is nevertheless sure of the divine compassion, v. 9 (8.) His prayer is heard and will



he answered, v. 10 (9), in the defeat and disappointment of his enemies, by whose malignant opposition his distress was caused, v. 11 (10.) This reference to his enemies constitutes the link of connexion between this psalm and the foregoing series, and maintains the contrast, running through that series, between two great classes of mankind, the righteous and the wicked, the subjects of Messiah and the rebels against him, the friends and foes of the theocracy, the friends and foes of David, as an individual, a sovereign, and a type of the Messiah. At the same time, this psalm differs wholly from the others in its tone of querulous but humble grief, which has caused it to be reckoned as the first of the Penitential Psalms. This tone is suddenly exchanged, in v. 9 (8), for one of confident assurance, perfectly in keeping with what goes before and true to nature.

1. *For the Chief Musician, (to be sung) with stringed instruments upon the eighth.* This last word corresponds exactly to our *octave*; but its precise application in the ancient music, we have now no means of ascertaining. An instrument of eight strings, which some suppose to be the sense, could hardly be described by the ordinal number *eighth*. We probably lose little by our incapacity to understand these technical expressions, while at the same time their very obscurity may serve to confirm our faith in their antiquity and genuineness, as parts of the original composition. This psalm, like the three which immediately precede it, describes itself as *a psalm of (or by) David, belonging to David*, as its author. The correctness of this statement there is as little reason to dispute in this as in either of the other cases.

2 (1). *Oh Lord, Jehovah, do not in thine anger rebuke me, and do not in thy heat, or hot displeasure, chasten me.* Both the original verbs properly denote the conviction and reproof of

an offender in words, but are here, as often elsewhere, applied to providential chastisements, in which God speaks with a reproving voice. This is not a prayer for the mitigation of the punishment, like that in Jer. x. 24, but for its removal, as appears from the account of the answer in vs. 9—11 (8—10.) Such a petition, while it indicates a strong faith, at the same time recognises the connexion between suffering and sin. In the very act of asking for relief, the Psalmist owns that he is justly punished. This may serve to teach us how far the confident tone of the preceding psalms is from betraying a self-righteous spirit, or excluding the consciousness of personal unworthiness and ill-desert. The boldness there displayed is not that of self-reliance, but of faith.

3 (2.) *Have mercy upon me, or be gracious unto me, oh Lord, Jehovah, for drooping, languishing, am I.* The original construction is, *for I am (one who) droops* or withers, like a blighted plant. Like a child complaining to a parent, he describes the greatness of his suffering as a reason for relieving him. *Heal me oh Lord, Jehovah, for shaken, agitated with distress and terror, are my bones,* here mentioned as the strength and framework of the body. This might seem to indicate corporeal disease as the whole from which he prays to be delivered. But the absence of any such allusion in the latter part of the psalm, and the explicit mention there of enemies as the occasion of his sufferings, shows that the pain of body here described was that arising from distress of mind, and which could only be relieved by the removal of the cause. To regard the bodily distress as a mere figure for internal anguish, would be wholly arbitrary and destructive of all sure interpretation. The physical effect here ascribed to moral causes is entirely natural and confirmed by all experience.

4 (3). The Psalmist himself guards against the error of sup

posing that his worst distresses were corporeal. *And my soul*, as well as my body, or more than my body, which merely sympathizes with it, *is greatly agitated*, terror-stricken, the same word that was applied to the bones in the preceding verse. The description of his suffering is then interrupted by another apostrophe to God. *And thou, oh Lord, Jehovah, until when*, how long? The sentence is left to be completed by the reader: how long wilt thou leave me thus to suffer? how long before thou wilt appear for my deliverance? This question, in its Latin form, *Domine quousque*, was Calvin's favourite ejaculation in his times of suffering, and especially of painful sickness.

5 (4.) The expostulatory question is now followed by direct petition. *Return, oh Lord, Jehovah, deliver my soul*, my life, my self, from this impending death. As God seems to be absent when his people suffer, so relief is constantly described as his return to them. (*Oh*) *save me*, a still more comprehensive term than that used in the first clause, *for the sake of thy mercy*, not merely according to it, as a rule or measure, but to vindicate it from reproach and do it honour, as a worthy end to be desired and accomplished.

6 (5.) As a further reason for his rescue, he now urges that without it God will lose the honour, and himself the happiness, of his praises and thanksgivings. *For there is not in death*, or the state of the dead, *thy remembrance*, any remembrance of thee. *In Sheol*, the grave, as a general receptacle, here parallel to *death*, and like it meaning the unseen world or state of the dead, *who will acknowledge*, or give thanks, *to thee*? The Hebrew verb denotes that kind of praise called forth by the experience of goodness. The question in the last clause is equivalent to the negative proposition in the first. This verse does not prove that David had no belief or expectation of a future state

nor that the intermediate state is an unconscious one, but only that in this emergency he looks no further than the close of life, as the appointed term of thanksgiving and praise. Whatever might eventually follow, it was certain that his death would put an end to the praise of God, in that form and those circumstances, to which he had been accustomed. See below, on Ps. xxx. 10 (9.) lxxxviii. 11—13 (10—12.) cxv. 17, 18, and compare Isaiah xxxviii. 18. So far is the argument here urged from being weakened by our clearer knowledge of the future state, that it is greatly strengthened by the substitution of the second or eternal death.

7 (6). *I am weary in (or of) my groaning*, I have become wearied with it, and unless I am relieved, *I shall* (still as hitherto) *make my bed swim every night, my couch with tears I shall dissolve*, or make to flow. The uniform translation of the verbs as presents does not bring out their full meaning, or express the idea, suggested in the Hebrew by the change of tense, that the grief which had already become wearisome must still continue without mitigation, unless God should interpose for his deliverance. Thus understood, the verse is not a mere description, but a disguised prayer.

8 (7.) *Mine eye has failed*, grown dim, a common symptom both of mental and bodily distress, *from vexation*, not mere grief, but grief mixed with indignation at my enemies. *It has grown old*, dim like the eye of an old man, a still stronger expression of the same idea, *in* (the midst of) *all my enemies*, or *in* (consequence of) *all my enemies*, i. e. of their vexatious conduct. Compare Ps. xxxi. 10 (9.) In these two verses he resumes the description of his own distress, in order to show that the argument in v. 6 (5) was appropriate to his case, as that of one drawing near to death, and therefore likely soon to lose the capacity and opportunity of praising God.

9 (8). Here the key abruptly changes from the tone of sorrowful complaint to that of joyful confidence. No gradual transition could have so successfully conveyed the idea, that the prayer of the psalmist has been heard and will be answered. The effect is like that of a whisper in the sufferer's ear, while still engrossed with his distresses, to assure him that they are about to terminate. This he announces by a direct and bold address to his persecuting enemies. *Depart from me, all ye doers of iniquity*, the same phrase that occurs in Ps. v. 6 (5.) The sense is not that he will testify his gratitude by abjuring all communion with the wicked, but that his assurance of divine protection relieves him from all fear of his wicked foes. When God arises, then his enemies are scattered. This sense is required by the last clause of v. 8 (7), and confirmed by a comparison with v. 11 (10.)—*For the Lord, Jehovah, hath heard the voice of my weeping*, or my weeping voice. The infrequency of silent grief is said to be characteristic of the orientals, and the same thing may be observed in Homer's pictures of heroic manners.

10 (9.) *Jehovah hath heard my supplication*. The assurance of this fact relieves all fear as to the future. *Jehovah my prayer will receive*. The change of tense is not unmeaning or fortuitous. The combination of the past and future represents the acceptance as complete and final, as already begun and certain to continue. The particular petition thus accepted is the one expressed or implied in the next verse.

11 (10.) *Ashamed and confounded*, i. e. disappointed and struck with terror, *shall be all my enemies*. The desire that they may be, is not expressed, but involved in the confident anticipation that they will be. In the second verb there is an obvious allusion to its use in vs. 3, 4 (2, 3.) As he had been terror-stricken, so shall they be. As they filled him with con-

sternation, so shall God fill them. *They shall return, turn back from their assault repulsed; they shall be ashamed, filled with shame at their defeat; and that not hereafter, (in) a moment, instantaneously.*

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## PSALM VII.

THE Psalmist still prays for deliverance from his enemies, vs. 2, 3 (1, 2), on the ground that he is innocent of that where-with they charge him, vs. 4—6 (3—5.) He prays for justice to himself and on his enemies, as a part of that great judicial process which belongs to God as the universal judge, vs. 7—10 (6—9.) He trusts in the divine discrimination between innocence and guilt, vs. 11, 12 (10, 11.) He anticipates God's vengeance on impenitent offenders, vs. 13, 14 (12, 13.) He sees them forced to act as self-destroyers, vs. 15—17 (14—16.) At the same time he rejoices in God's mercy to himself, and to the whole class whom he represents, v. 18 (17.)

The penitential tone, which predominated in the sixth psalm here gives way again to that of self-justification, perhaps because the Psalmist here speaks no longer as an individual, but as the representative of the righteous or God's people. The two views which he thus takes of himself are perfectly consistent, and should be suffered to interpret one another.

1 *Shiggaion*, i. e. wandering, error. The noun occurs only here and in the plural form, Hab. iii. 1, but the verb from



which it is derived is not uncommon, and is applied by Saul to his own errors with respect to David. 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. See also Ps. cxix. 10, 118. Hence some explain the word here as denoting moral error, sin, and make it descriptive of the subject of the psalm. See above, on Ps. v. 1. Still more in accordance with the literal meaning of the root is the opinion that it here denotes the wandering of David at the period when the psalm was probably conceived. In either case, it means a song of wandering or error, *which he sang*, in the literal sense, or in the secondary one of poetical composition, as Virgil says, I sing the man and arms, i. e. they are the subject of my poem. *To the Lord, Jehovah, to whom a large part of the psalm is really addressed. Concerning (or because of) the words of Cush the Benjamite.* It is clear from vs. 4—6 (3—5), that *the words* referred to were calumnious reports or accusations. These may have been uttered by one Cush, a Benjamite, who nowhere else appears in history. But as this very circumstance makes it improbable that he would have been singled out, as the occasion of this psalm, from among so many slanderers, some suppose Cush to be Shimei, who cursed David when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. xvi. 5—13.) As the psalm, however, seems much better suited to the times of Saul, some suppose *Cush*, which is properly the Hebrew name of Ethiopia, to be here an enigmatical name applied to Saul himself, in reference to the blackness of his heart, and perhaps to his incorrigible wickedness. See Jer. xiii. 23 and Amos ix. 7. The description *Benjamite*, is equally appropriate to Saul (1 Sam. ix. 1, 2. xvi. 5, 11) and Shimei, who indeed were kinsmen. This explanation of the word *Cush* is less forced than it might otherwise appear, because enigmatical descriptions of the theme are not unfrequent in the titles of the Psalms. See above, on Ps. v. 1, and below, on Ps. ix. 1. xxii. 1. liii. 1. lvii. 1. lx. 1.

2 (1). The Psalm opens with an expression of strong confidence in God, and a prayer founded on it. *Oh Lord, Jehovah, my God*, not merely by creation but by special covenant, *in thee*, as such, and therefore in no other, *I have trusted*, and do still trust. This relation and this trust entitle him to audience and deliverance. *Save me from all my persecutors*, or pursuers, a term frequently employed in David's history. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 15 (14.) xxvi. 20. By these we are here to understand the whole class of worldly and ungodly men, of which Saul was the type and representative. The *all* suggests the urgency of the necessity, as a motive to immediate interposition.—*And extricate me*, or deliver me. The primary idea of the verb translated *save* is that of making room, enlarging. See above, on Ps. iv. 2 (1.)

3 (2.) *Lest he tear, like a lion, my soul*. The singular form, following the plural in the foregoing verse, may have particular reference to Saul, or to the class of which he was a type, personified as an ideal individual. The imagery of the verse is borrowed from the habits of wild beasts, with which David was familiar from a child. See 1 Sam. xvii. 34—37. The soul or life is mentioned as the real object of attack, and not as a mere periphrasis for the personal pronoun, as if *my soul* were equivalent to *me*. *Rending*, or *breaking* the bones, *and there is none delivering*, or with none to deliver.

4 (3.) He proceeds upon the principle that God will not hear the prayer of the wicked, and that he must hear that of the righteous. He proceeds, therefore, to assert his innocence, not his freedom from all sin, but from that particular offence with which he had been charged. *Oh Lord, Jehovah, my God*, as in v. 2 (1), *if I have done this*, which follows, or this of which I am accused, referring to "the words of Cush," the calumnies, which gave occasion to the psalm itself. *If there is*

with emphasis on the verb, which might have been omitted in Hebrew, and is therefore emphatic, *if there is indeed*, as my accusers say, *perverseness*, iniquity, *in my palms*, in the palms of my hands, here mentioned as instruments of evil. The apodosis of the sentence is contained in v. 6 (5) below.

5 (4.) *If I have repaid my friend*, one at peace with me, *evil*, and *spoiled*, plundered, *(one) distressing me*, acting as my enemy, *without a cause*. There seems to be an allusion here to the two periods of David's connexion with Saul, that of their friendly intercourse, and that of their open enmity. During neither of these had David been guilty of the sins charged upon him. He had not conspired against Saul while in his service (1 Sam. xxii. 7, 8), and when persecuted by him he had spared his life (1 Sam. xxiv. 10, 11.) Some suppose this last fact to be here referred to, and translate the second clause, *yea I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy*. The Hebrew verb is certainly used elsewhere in this sense (2 Sam. xxii. 20. Ps. vi. 5), but its primary meaning seems to be that of stripping or spoiling a conquered enemy. The first construction above given is moreover much more natural, and agrees better with the grammatical dependence of the second verb upon the first.

6 (5.) His consciousness of innocence is expressed in the strongest manner by invoking the divine displeasure if the charge can be established. *An enemy*, or by poetic licence, *the enemy*, whether Saul or the ideal enemy referred to in v. 3 (2), *shall pursue*, or *may pursue*, which is equivalent to saying, *let the enemy pursue my soul*, the figure being still the same as in v. 3 (2) above, but carried out with more minuteness, *and overtake (it)*, and *trample to the earth my life*, and *my honour in the dust make dwell*, i. e. completely prostrate and degrade. Some regard *honour* as equivalent to *soul* and

*life*, the intelligent and vital part, which is the glory of man's constitution. But the analogy of Ps. iii. 4 (3) and iv. 3 (2) makes it more probable that in this case also there is reference to the Psalmist's personal and official honour. The allusion, however, is not so much to posthumous disgrace as to present humiliation. All this he imprecates upon himself if really guilty of the charges calumniously brought against him. The solemnity of this appeal to God, as a witness and a judge, is enhanced by the usual pause. *Selah*.

7 (6.) Upon this protestation of his innocence he founds a fresh prayer for protection and deliverance. *Arise*, arouse thyself, *oh Lord*, Jehovah. See above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7.) *Arise in thine anger, raise thyself, or be exalted, in*, i. e. amidst, *the ragings of my enemies*. The idea *because of my enemies* is rather implied than expressed. The sense directly intended seems to be that as his enemies are raging, it is time for God to arise in anger too. As they rage against him, he calls upon God to rise in anger against them. *And awake*, a still stronger figure than *arise*, because implying sleep as well as inactivity. *Awake unto me*, at my call and for my benefit. *Judgment hast thou commanded* or ordained. Let that judgment now be executed. He appeals to the general administration of God's justice, as a ground for expecting it in this one case. As it was part of the divine plan or purpose to do justice, both on friends and foes, here was an opportunity to put it into execution.

8 (7.) *And the congregation of nations shall surround thee*, which in this connexion is equivalent to saying, *let it surround thee*. The most probable sense of these obscure words is, appear in the midst of the nations as their judge. The same connexion between God's judicial government in general and his judicial acts in a particular case, that is implied in the

preceding verse, is here embodied in the figure of an oriental king dispensing justice to his subjects in a popular assembly. *And above it, the assembly, to the high place, or the height, return thou.* This may either mean, return to heaven when the judgment is concluded, or, which seems more natural, resume thy seat as judge above this great ideal congregation. *Above it, thus assembled to receive thee, to the high place, or the judgment seat, return thou,* after so long an absence, previously intimated by the summons to arise and awake. Inaction, sleep, and absence from the judgment seat, are all bold metaphors for God's delay to save his people and destroy their enemies.

9 (8.) The same thing is now expressed in a direct and formal manner. *Jehovah will judge, is to judge, the nations.* This is laid down as a certain general proposition, from which the Psalmist draws a special inference in the shape of a petition. *Judge me, oh Lord, Jehovah!* If it be true that God will judge the world, redress all wrong, and punish all iniquity, let him begin with me. Let me share now in the justice which is to be universally administered. *Judge me, oh Lord, according to my right, and my completeness, or perfection, over me,* i. e. according to my innocence which covers and protects me. All such expressions must be qualified and explained by the confession of unworthiness in Ps. vi. and elsewhere, which sufficiently demonstrates that the Psalmist here makes no claim to absolute perfection and innocence, nor to any whatever that is independent of God's sovereign mercy.

10 (9.) *Let cease, I pray, the badness of wicked (men).* The future has an optative meaning given to it by the Hebrew particle (אִם), which is often rendered *now*, not as an adverb of time, but of entreaty. Between man and man, it is frequently equivalent to *if you please* in modern parlance. When ad

dressed to God, it scarcely admits of any other version than *I pray*. The assonance or paronomasia in the common version, *wickedness of the wicked*, is not found in the original, where two words, not akin to one another, are employed. The plural form of *wicked* is also lost or left ambiguous in the common version.—*And thou wilt confirm, or establish, a righteous (man), and a trier of hearts and reins*, constantly used in Scripture for the internal dispositions, *(is the) righteous God*, or *(art thou) oh righteous God*, which last agrees best with the direct address to God in the preceding clauses. This does not merely mean that God is omniscient, and therefore able thus to try the hearts and reins, but that he actually does it. Here he is specially appealed to, as a judge or umpire between Saul, or “the wicked” whom he represented, and “the righteous,” of whom David was the type and champion.

11 (10.) *My shield (is) upon God*. My protection or defence depends on him alone. The figure is the same as in Ps. iii. 4 (3) and v. 13 (12.) Here again the hope of personal deliverance is founded on a general truth, as to the course of the divine administration. *My shield (is) upon God, saving, or who saves*, the Saviour of, *the upright*, straight-forward, or sincere *in heart*. This is a new indirect assertion of his own integrity and innocence.

12 (11.) The second word in the original of this verse may be either a participle or a noun, so that the clause admits of two translations, *God (is) a righteous judge*, and, *God (is) judging*, i. e. *judges, the righteous*. The first would be a repetition of the general truth taught in v. 9 (8) above, but here applied to the punishment of the wicked, as it is there to the salvation of the innocent. According to the other construction, the verse before us presents both ideas: *God judges the righteous*, i. e. does him justice, and *God is angry every day*. The



object of this anger, although not expressed, is obvious, and is even rendered more conspicuous by this omission. As if he had said: 'God, who does justice to the righteous, has likewise objects for his indignation.'

13 (12). *If he*, the sinner a. whom God is angry, *will not turn*, i. e. turn back from his impious and rebellious undertakings, *his sword he will whet*, i. e. with a natural though sudden change of subject, God will whet his sword, often referred to as an instrument of vengeance. *His bow he has trodden on*, alluding to the ancient mode of bending the large and heavy bows used in battle, *and made it ready*. The bow and the sword were the most common weapons used in ancient warfare. The past tense of these verbs implies that the instruments of vengeance are prepared already, and not merely viewed as something future.

14 (13.) *And at him* (the wicked enemy) *he has aimed*, or directed, *the instruments of death*, his deadly weapons. This is still another step in advance. The weapons are not only ready for him, but aimed at him. *His arrows to (be) burning he will make*, i. e. he will make his arrows burning arrows, in allusion to the ancient military custom of shooting ignited darts or arrows into besieged towns, for the purpose of setting them on fire, as well as that of personal injury. The figurative terms in these two verses all express the certainty and promptness of the divine judgments on incorrigible sinners. For even these denunciations are not absolute, but suspended on the enemy's repentance or persistency in evil. That significant phrase, *if he will not turn*, may be tacitly supplied as qualifying every threatening in the book, however strong and unconditional in its expressions.

15 (14.) *Behold, he*, the wicked man, *will writhe*, or travail

(*with*) *iniquity*, (towards others), *and conceive mischief* (to himself), *and bring forth falsehood*, self-deception, disappointment. The meaning seems to be that while bringing his malignant schemes to maturity, he will unconsciously conceive and bring forth ruin to himself.

16 (15.) The same idea is then expressed by other figures, borrowed perhaps from certain ancient modes of hunting. *A well he has digged*, i. e. a pitfall for his enemy, *and hollowed it*, or made it deep, *and fallen into the pit he is making*, or about to make. The change from the past tense to the future seems to place the catastrophe between the inception and completion of the plan. The translation of the last verb as a simple preterite is entirely ungrammatical.

17 (16.) Still a third variation of the same theme. *His mischief shall return upon his own head*, literally into it, like a falling body which not only rests upon an object but sinks and is embedded in it. *And on his own crown his violence*, including the ideas of injustice and cruelty, *shall come down*.

18 (17.) While the wicked enemy of God and his people is thus made to execute the sentence on himself, the Psalmist already exults in the experience of God's saving mercy. *I will praise the Lord*, Jehovah, i. e. acknowledge his favours. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) *According to his right*, desert, or due, as in v. 9 (8) above. Or *according to his righteousness*, his justice, i. e. the praise shall correspond to the display just made of this attribute, as well in the deliverance of the Psalmist as in the destruction of his enemies. *And I will sing praise*, praise by singing, praise in song, *the name*, the manifested excellence, (see above, on Ps. v. 12 (11),) *of the Lord*, Jehovah, *High or Most High*. He will praise the Lord in this exalted character as manifested by his dealings in the case which gave occasion

to the Psalm. The resolution thus expressed may be considered as founded in the Psalm itself, so confident is he that it cannot be performed before his prayer is answered. Or the words may be understood as engaging us to continue these and no other prayers thereafter.

## PSALM VIII.

THIS psalm begins and ends with an admiring recognition of God's manifest attributes, vs. 2 [1] and 10 [9]. In the intermediate verses the manifestation is traced first in the inanimate creation, vs. 3-4 [2-3], and then in animated nature, vs. 5-8 [4-8], with particular reference to man's exiguity. This is indeed the main aspect of the psalm, the glory of God in nature being only introduced to heighten the goodness to mankind. We have here therefore a description of the dignity of human nature, as it was at first and as it is to be restored in Christ, to which the descriptive terms may therefore be applied, without forced or fanciful accommodation on the one hand, and without losing the primary generic import of the composition on the other.

1 To the Chief Musician, or for according to the Gittith. The word which reappears in the titles of two other psalms (one eighty-first and eighty-fourth), would seem, from the form, to be the feminine of Gith, which always means a Gith or instrument of Gith. See Job xiv. 3. 2 Sam. vi. 16. or 18. As David once resided there, and had afterwards much intercourse

with the inhabitants, the word may naturally here denote an instrument there invented or in use, or an air, or a style of performance, borrowed from that city. Some prefer, however, to derive it from the primary sense of *Gath* in Hebrew, which is *wine-press*, and apply it either to an instrument of that shape, or to a melody or style which usage had connected with the joy of vintage or the pressing of the grapes. Either of these explanations is more probable than that which derives *Gittith* from the same root with *neginoth* in the titles of Ps. iv and vi. and gives it the same sense, viz. stringed instruments, or the music of stringed instruments. Besides the dubious etymology on which this explanation rests, it is improbable that two such technical terms would have been used to signify precisely the same thing. The only further observation to be made upon this title is, that all the psalms to which it is prefixed are of a joyous character, which agrees well with the supposition that it signifies an air or style of musical performance. The ascription of this *Psalm to David*, as its author, is fully confirmed by its internal character.

2 (1). *Jehovah, our Lord*, not of the Psalmist only, but of all men, and especially all Israel, *how glorious (is) thy name*, thy manifested excellence, (see above, Ps. v. 11. vii. 17.) *in all the earth, which give thy glory*, i. e. which glory of thine give or place, *above the heavens*. The verbal form here used is, in every other place where it occurs, an imperative, and should not therefore, without necessity, be otherwise translated. Thus understood, the clause contains a prayer or wish, that the divine glory may be made still more conspicuous. To give or place glory on an object, is an idiomatic phrase repeatedly used elsewhere, to denote the conferring of honour on an inferior. See Num. xxvii. 20. 1 Chron. xxix. 25. Dan. xi. 21. It here implies that the glory belonging to the frame of nature is not inherent but derivative.

3 (2). *From the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast founded strength.* The instinctive admiration of thy works, even by the youngest children, is a strong defence against those who would question thy being or obscure thy glory. The Septuagint version of the last words in this clause, thou hast prepared (or provided) praise, conveys the same idea with a change of form, since it is really the praise or admiration of the child that it is described in the original as strength. This version is adopted by Matthew, in his record of our Lord's reply to the Pharisees, when they complained of the hosannas uttered by the children in the temple (Matth. xxi. 16). That allusion does not prove that Christ was the primary subject of this psalm, but only that the truth expressed in the words quoted was exemplified in that case. If the Scriptures had already taught that even the unconscious admiration of the infant is a tribute to God's glory, how much more might children of maturer age be suffered to join in acclamations to his Son. The sense thus put upon the words of David agrees better with the context than the one preferred by some interpreters, viz. that the defence in question is afforded by the structure and progress of the child itself. If this had been intended, he would hardly have said *from the mouth*, or have confined his subsequent allusions to the splendor of the firmament.—The effect or rather the legitimate tendency of this spontaneous testimony is *to silence enemy and avenger*, i. e. to stop the mouths of all malignant railers against God, whose cavils and sophisms are put to shame by the instinctive recognition of God's being and his glory by the youngest children.

4 (3.) *When I see thy heavens, the work of thy fingers*, an expression borrowed from the habits of men, to whom the fingers are natural organs of contrivance and construction, *the moon and the stars which thou hast fixed*, or settled in their several spheres. As we constantly associate the sky and sun

together, the latter, although not expressly mentioned, may be considered as included in the subject of the first clause. Or the mention of the moon and stars without the sun may be understood to mark this as an evening hymn. There is no ground, however, for referring this psalm to the pastoral period of David's life, or for doubting that it was composed when he was king.

5 (4). The sentence begun in the preceding verse is here completed. When I see thy heavens, &c. *what is man*, frail man, as the original word signifies, *that thou shouldst remember him*, think of him, attend to him, and (any) son of man, or the son of man, as a generic designation of the race, that *thou shouldst visit him*, i. e. according to the usage of this figure, manifest thyself to him, either in wrath or mercy. See Gen. xviii. 14. xxi. 1. Ruth i. 6. &c. Here of course the latter is intended. The scriptural idea of a divine visitation is of something which reveals God's special presence and activity, whether as a friend or foe. The interrogation in this verse implies a strong negation of man's worthiness to be thus honoured, not in comparison with the material universe, to which he is in truth superior, but with the God whose glory the whole frame of nature was intended to display and does display, even to the least matured and cultivated minds. It was with a view to this comparison, and not for its own sake, or as the main subject of the psalm, that the glory of creation was referred to the foregoing verse.

6 (5.) *And remove him little from divinity*, i. e. from a divine and heavenly, or at least a superhuman state. The Hebrew noun is the common one for *God*, but being plural in its form, is sometimes used in a more vague and abstract sense for all conditions of existence higher than our own 1 Sam xxviii. 13. Zech. ix. 7 Hence it is sometimes rendered *angels*,



in the Septuagint, which version, although inexact, is retained in the New Testament (Heb. ii. 7), because it sufficiently expresses the idea which was essential to the writer's argument. The verb in this clause strictly means to make or let one want, to leave deficient. Eccles. iv. 8. vi. 2. The form here used (that of the future with *vav* conversive) connects it in the closest manner with the verb of the preceding verse, a construction which may be imperfectly conveyed by the omission of the auxiliary verbs in English. 'What is man that thou shouldst remember him, and visit him, and make him want but little of divinity, and crown him with honour and glory?' The Hebrew order of the last clause is: *and (with) honour and glory crown him*. These nouns are elsewhere put together to express royal dignity. Ps. xxi. 1. 6 (5.) xlv. 4 (3.) Jer. xxii. 18. 1 Chron. xxix. 25. There is an obvious allusion to man's being made in the image of God, with dominion over the inferior creation. Gen. 1. 26, 28. ix. 2. This is predicated not of the individual but of the race, which lost its perfection in Adam and recovers it in Christ. Hence the description is pre-eminently true of him, and the application of the words in Heb. ii. 7 is entirely legitimate, although it does not make him the exclusive subject of the psalm itself.

7 (6.) The same construction is continued through the first clause of this verse. *Make him rule*, i. e. what is man that thou shouldst make him rule, *in*, among, and by implication *over*, *the works*, the other and inferior creatures, *of thy hands*. The use of the future form in Hebrew up to this point is dependent on the question and contingent particle (*what is man that*) in v. 5 (4.) The question being now exhausted or exchanged for a direct affirmation, the past tense is resumed. *All*, every thing, *hast thou put under his feet*, i. e. subjected to his power. The application of these terms to Christ, (1 Cor. xv. 27. Eph. i. 22) as the ideal representative of human nature;

in its restored perfection, is precisely similar to that of the expressions used in the preceding verse.

8 (7.) This verse contains a mere specification of the general term *all* in the verse before it. *Sheep*, or rather *flocks*, including sheep and goats, *and oxen*, as a generic term for larger cattle, *and also*, not only these domesticated animals but also, *beasts of the field*, which always means in scripture wild beasts, (Gen. ii. 20. iii. 14. 1 Sam. xvii. 44. Joel 1. 20) field being used in such connexions to denote not the cultivated land but the open, unenclosed, and wilder portions of the country. The whole verse is a general description of all quadrupeds or beasts, whether tame or wild.

9 (8). To complete the cycle of animated nature, the inhabitants of the air and water are now added to those of the earth. *Bird of heaven*, a collective phrase, denoting the birds of the sky, i. e. those which fly across the visible heavens. The common version, "fowl of the air," is descriptive of the same objects, but is not a strict translation. *And fishes of the sea, and (every thing) passing in, or through, the paths of the sea.* Some read, without supplying any thing, *fishes of the sea passing through the paths of the sea.* But this weakens the expression, and is also at variance with the form of the original, where *passing* is a singular. Others construe it with man, who is then described as passing over the sea and ruling its inhabitants. But neither the syntax nor the sense is, on the whole, so natural as that proposed above, which makes this a residuary comprehensive clause, intended to embrace whatever might not be included in the more specific terms by which it is preceded. The dominion thus ascribed to man, as a part of his original prerogative, is not to be confounded with the coercive rule which he still exercises over the inferior creation (Gen. ix. 2. James

iii. 7), although this is really a relic of his pristine state and at the same time an earnest of its future restoration.

10 (9.) *Jehovah, our Lord, how glorious is thy name in all the earth*, not only made so by the splendor of the skies, but by God's condescending goodness to mankind. With this new evidence and clearer view of the divine perfection, the Psalmist here comes back to the point from which he started, and closes with a solemn repetition of the theme propounded in the opening sentence.

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## PSALM IX.

THIS psalm expresses, in a series of natural and striking alternations, gratitude for past deliverances, trust in God's power and disposition to repeat them, and direct and earnest prayer for such repetition. We have first the acknowledgment of former mercies, vs. 2—7 (1—6); then the expression of trust for the future, vs. 8—13 (7—12); then the petition founded on it, vs. 14, 15 (13, 14.) The same succession of ideas is repeated: recollection of the past, vs. 16, 17 (15, 16); anticipation of the future, vs. 18, 19 (17, 18); prayer for present and immediate help, vs. 20, 21 (19, 20). This parallelism of the parts makes the structure of the psalm remarkably like that of the seventh. The composition was intentionally so framed as to be a vehicle of pious feeling to the church at any period of strife and persecution. The form is that of the Old Testament;

but the substance and the spirit are common to both dispensations.

1. *To the Chief Musician. Al-muth-labben.* This enigmatical title has been variously explained. Some understand it as descriptive of the subject, and make *labben* an anagram of *Nabal*, the name of one of David's enemies, and at the same time an appellative denoting *fool*, in which sense it is frequently applied to the wicked. See for example Ps. xiv. 1. The whole would then mean *on the death of the fool*, i. e. the sinner. Such enigmatical changes are supposed to occur in Jer. xxv. 26. li. 1. 41. Zech. ix. 1. Others, by a change of pointing in the Hebrew, for *al-muth* read *alamoth*, a musical term occurring in the title of Ps. xlv. or a cognate form *almuth*, and explain *labben* to mean *for Ben*, or *the (children of) Ben*, one of the Levitical singers mentioned in 1 Chr. xv. 18. Neither of these explanations seem so natural as a third, which supposes *muth-labben* to be the title, or the first words, or a prominent expression, of some other poem, in the style, or to the air of which, this psalm was composed. *After the manner*, or *to the air*, of (the song or poem) *Death to the son*, or the death of the son. Compare 2 Sam. i. 18, where David's elegy on Saul appears to be called *Kesheth*, or the *Bow*, because that word is a prominent expression in the composition. As it cannot be supposed that the expression was originally without meaning, the obscurity, in this and many similar cases, is rather a proof of antiquity than of the opposite.

2 (1.) *I will thank Jehovah*, praise him for his benefits, *with all my heart*, sincerely, cordially, and with a just appreciation of the greatness of his favours. *I will recount all thy wonders*, the wonderful things done by thee, with special reference to those attested by his own experience. The change from the third to the second person is entirely natural, as if the Psalmist's

war<sup>1</sup>nth of feeling would not suffer him to speak any longer merely of God, as one absent, but compelled him to turn to him, as the immediate object of address. There is no need, therefore, of supplying *thee* in the first clause, and construing *Jehovah* as a vocative.

3 (2). *I will joy and triumph in thee*, not merely in thy presence, or because of thee, i. e. because of what thou hast done, but in communion with thee, and because of my personal interest in thee. The form of the verbs, both here and in the last clause of the preceding verse, expresses strong desire and fixed determination. See above, on Ps. ii. 3. *I will praise, or celebrate in song*. See above, on Ps. vii. 18 (17.) *Thy name*, thy manifested excellence. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) (*Thou*) *Highest, or Most High!* See above, on Ps. vii. 18 (17.) Here again there is special reference to the proofs of God's supremacy afforded by his recent dealings with the Psalmist and his enemies.

4 (3.) *In the turning of my enemies back*, i. e. from the assault on me, which is equivalent to saying, in their retreat, their defeat, their disappointment. This may either be connected with what goes before, and understood as a statement of the reason or occasion of the praise there promised—'I will celebrate thy name when (or because) my enemies turn back'—or it may begin a new sentence, and ascribe their defeat to the agency of God himself—'when my enemies turn back (it is because) *they are to stumble, and perish from thy presence*, from before thee, or *at thy presence*, i. e. as soon as thou appearest. The Hebrew preposition has both a causative and local meaning. The form of the verbs does not necessarily imply that the deliverance acknowledged was still future, but only that it might occur again, and that in any such case, whether past or yet to come, Jehovah was and would be

the true author of the victory achieved. The act of stumbling implies that of falling as its natural consequence, and is often used in Scripture as a figure for complete and ruinous failure.

5 (4) This was not a matter of precarious expectation, but of certain experience. *For thou hast made, done, executed wrought out, and thereby maintained, my cause and my right* This phrase is always used elsewhere in a favourable sense, and never in the vague one of simply doing justice, whether to the innocent or guilty. See Deut. x. 18. 1 Kings viii. 45, 49. Ps. cxl. 12, and compare Isaiah x. 2. And this defence was not merely that of an advocate, but that of a judge, or rather of a sovereign in the exercise of those judicial functions which belong to royalty. See Prov. xx. 8. *Thou hast sat, and sittest, on a throne*, the throne of universal sovereignty, *judging right*, i. e. rightly, or *a judge of righteousness*, a righteous judge. See above, on Ps. vii. 12 (11). In this august character the Psalmist had already seen Jehovah, and he therefore gives it as a reason for expecting him to act in accordance with it now.

6 (5.) The forensic terms of the preceding verse are now explained as denoting the destruction of God's enemies. *Thou hast rebuked nations*, not merely individuals but nations. God's chastisements are often called rebukes, because in them he speaks by act as clearly as he could by word. *Thou hast destroyed a wicked (one)*, i. e. many a wicked enemy, in former times, in other cases, and that not with a partial ruin, but with complete extermination even of their memory. *Their name*, that by which men are distinguished and remembered, thou *hast blotted out*, erased, effaced, obliterated, *to perpetuity and eternity*, an idiomatic combination, coincident in sense, though not in form, with the English phrase, *forever and ever*. This verse does not refer exclusively to any one manifestation of God's



power and wrath, but to the general course of his dealings with his enemies, and especially to their invariable issue, the destruction of the adverse party.

7 (6.) *The enemy*, or *as to the enemy*, a nominative absolute placed at the beginning of the sentence for the sake of emphasis—*finished*, completed, *are (his) ruins*, desolations, *forever*, i. e. he is ruined or made desolate forever. The construction of the first word as a vocative—*oh enemy, ended are (thy) desolations forever*, i. e. the desolations caused by thee—affords a good sense, but is neither so agreeable to usage nor to the context as the one first given. Still less so are the other versions which have been given of this difficult clause. E. g. The enemies are completely desolate forever;—the enemies are consumed, (there are) ruins (or desolations) forever, &c. The address is still to Jehovah, as in the preceding verse. *And (their) cities*, viz. those of the enemy, *hast thou destroyed*. According to the second construction above given, this would mean, *thou (oh enemy) hast destroyed cities*, but art now destroyed thyself. The same reasons as before require us to prefer Jehovah as the object of address. *Gone, perished, is their very memory*. The idiomatic form of the original in this clause cannot be retained in a translation. The nearest approach to it would be, *gone is their memory, themselves*. This may either mean *their memory*, viz. (*that of*) *themselves*, i. e. their own; or, *perished is their memory (and) themselves (with it)*. There seems to be an obvious allusion to the threatenings against Amalek in the books of Moses (Exod. xvii. 14. Num. xxiv. 20. Deut. xxv. 19), which received their literal fulfilment in the conquests of Saul and David (1 Sam. xv. 3, 7. xxvii. 8, 9. xxx. 1, 17. 2 Sam. viii. 12. 1 Chron. iv. 43.) But this is evidently here presented merely as a sample of other conquests over the surrounding nations (2 Sam. viii. 11--14), and even these as only samples

of the wonders wrought by God for his own people, and celebrated in v. 2 (1) above.

8 (7.) *And Jehovah to eternity, forever, will sit*, as he sit now, upon the throne and judgment-seat. *He has set up for judgment*, for the purpose of acting as a judge, *his throne*. It is not as an absolute or arbitrary ruler, but as a just judge, that Jehovah reigns. This recognition of God's judicial character and office as perpetual is intended to prepare the way for an appeal to his righteous intervention in the present case.

9 (8.) *And he*, himself, with emphasis upon the pronoun, *is to judge the world*, the fruitful and cultivated earth, as the Hebrew word properly denotes, here put for its inhabitants, *in justice*, or righteousness, i. e. in the exercise of this divine perfection. *He will judge*, a different Hebrew verb, to which we have no equivalent, *he will judge nations*, peoples, races, not mere individuals, *in equities*, in equity, the plural form denoting fulness or completeness, as in Ps. i. 1. As the preceding verse describes Jehovah's kingship as judicial, so the verse before us represents him in the actual exercise of his judicial functions.

10 (9.) *And (so) will Jehovah be a high place*, out of reach of danger, hence a refuge, *for the oppressed*, literally the bruised or broken in pieces, *a high place*, refuge, *in times of distress*, literally *at times in distress*, i. e. *at times* (when men are) *in distress*. God's judicial sovereignty is exercised so as to relieve the sufferer and deliver those in danger.

11 (10.) *And in thee will trust*, as now so in all time to come, *the knowers of thy name*, those who know the former exhibitions of thy greatness and thy goodness, all which are included in the *name* of God. See v. 3 (2), and Ps. viii. 2 (1)

vii. 18 (17.) v. 12 (11.) *For thou hast not forsaken thy seekers, or (those) seeking thee, oh Lord, Jehovah, i. e. seeking thy favour in general, and thy protection against their enemies in particular. The certain knowledge of this fact is laid as the foundation of the confidence expressed in the first clause.*

12 (11). *Sing, make music, give praise by song or music, to Jehovah, as the God of Israel, inhabiting Zion, i. e. the sanctuary there established. Or the words may mean sitting, as a king, enthroned, (in) Zion, which agrees well with the use of the same verbs in vs. 5, 8 (4, 7,) above, although the other version is favoured by the obvious allusion to the symbolical import of the sanctuary under the Mosaic law, as teaching the great doctrine of God's dwelling among men. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4). v. 7 (6.) Zion is here represented as the centre of a circle reaching far beyond the house of Israel, and indeed co-extensive with the earth. Tell, declare, make known, in, among, the nations, his exploits, his noble deeds, the wonders mentioned in v. 2 (1.) We have here, in his inspired formula of worship, a clear proof that the ancient church believed and understood the great truth, that the law was to go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isai. ii. 3. Mic. iv. 2.*

13 (12.) *For seeking blood, or as an inquisitor of blood, he has remembered, he remembers, it, i. e. the blood; he has not forgotten the cry of the distressed. God is here revealed in the character which he assumes in Gen. ix. 5, where the same verb and noun are used as in the first clause of the verse before us. The word translated blood is in the plural form. See above, on Ps. v. 7 (6.) Hence the literal translation of the next words is, he has remembered them, i. e. the bloods or murders. The cry meant is the cry of suffering and complaint, with particular reference to Gen. iv. 10. According to another reading of the*

fast clause, the cry is that of the meek or humble, not of the distressed. But the common text affords a better sense and really includes the other, as the innocence of the sufferers is implied, though not expressed. The general import of the verse is that God's judgments, though deferred, are not abandoned, that he does not forget even what he seems to disregard, and that sooner or later he will certainly appear as an avenger. Murder is here put, as the highest crime against the person, for all others, and indeed for wickedness in general.

14 (13.) *Have mercy upon me*, or be gracious to me *oh Jehovah, see my suffering from my haters, raising me from the gates of death.* The view previously taken of God's faithfulness and justice is now made the ground of an importunate petition for deliverance from present dangers and distress. *My haters*, those who hate me. *From my haters* may be taken as a pregnant construction, meaning: see my suffering (and free me) from my enemies. Thus in 2 Sam. xviii. 19, 'Jehovah hath judged him from the hand of his enemies' means 'hath done him justice (and so freed him) from the power of his enemies.' See a similar expression in Ps. xxii. 22 (21) below. It seems more natural and obvious, however, in the case before us, to give *from* a causal meaning. 'See my distress (arising) from, or caused by, those who hate me.' *Raising me* does not denote an accompanying act, as if he had said, see my distress, and at the same time lift me up, &c. It is rather descriptive of a certain divine character or habit, and agrees with the pronoun of the second person understood. 'Thou that liftest me up,' that art accustomed so to do, that hast done so in other cases, with an implied prayer, do so now. The *gates of death* may have reference to the image of a subterranean dungeon, from which no prisoner can free himself; or it may be simply a poetical expression for the *entrance* to the grave or the state of the dead Compare Isai. xxxviii. 10 and Matth. xvi 18

15 (14.) *That I may recount all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion, may joy in thy salvation.* This is one important end for which he asks to be delivered, namely, that God may have the praise of his deliverance. There is a trace, in the Hebrew text, of an original plural form, *praises*, which might then denote praiseworthy deeds, actions worthy to be celebrated. But the singular form occurs with *all* in Ps. cvi. 2 below.—The gates here mentioned are contrasted with those of the preceding verse. The God who saves him from the gates of death shall be praised for this deliverance in the gates of the daughter of Zion. This last expression is supposed by some to be a personification of the people inhabiting Zion or Jerusalem, who are then put for Israel at large, as the church or chosen people. Others regard the genitive construction as equivalent to a simple apposition, as in *river of Euphrates*, or in our familiar phrase, *the city of Jerusalem*. The personification is then that of the city itself, considered as an ideal virgin, and on that account called *daughter*, by a usage similar to that of the corresponding word in French. In either case, there is an obvious reference to the ancient church, as the scene or the witness of the Psalmist's praises.—The verb in the last clause may be made to depend upon the particle at the beginning of the verse, (*that*) *I may exult*; or it may be still more emphatically construed as an independent proposition, *I will exult in thy salvation*. The form of the verb is the same as in Ps. ii. 3 above. The second verb itself occurs in v. 11 of that psalm, and as in that case, may either denote an inward emotion or the outward expression of it, *I will shout*.—*In thy salvation*, i. e. in the possession or experience of it, and in acknowledgment of having thus experienced or possessed it.

16 (15.) *Sunk are nations in a pit they made; in a net which they hid, taken is their foot.* This may be either a confident anticipation of the future as if already past. or a fur

ther reference to previous deliverance, as a ground of hope for others yet to come.—*Nations*, whole nations, when opposed to God. Compare Ps. ii. 1. The accessory idea of *Gentiles heathen*, would be necessarily suggested, at the same time to a Hebrew reader. Most versions have the definite forms, *the pit, the net*; but the indefinite form of the original is equally intelligible in English, and therefore preferable as a more exact translation. The ellipsis of the relative, *a pit* (which) *they made*, is common to the Hebrew idiom and our own. The figures are borrowed from ancient modes of hunting. See above, on Ps. vii. 16 (15).—*Their foot*, their own foot, not that of the victim, whose destruction they intended.

17 (16.) *Known is Jehovah*, or has made himself known. *Justice has he done*, or judgment has he executed. *In the work of his (own) hands ensnared is a wicked (man)*. *Higgaion*, meditation. *Selah*, pause. God has revealed himself as present and attentive, notwithstanding his apparent oblivion and inaction, by doing justice on his enemies, or rather by making them do justice on themselves, converting their devices against others into means of self-destruction. In view of this most striking attestation of God's providential government, the reader is summoned to reflect, and enabled so to do by a significant and solemn pause. The sense of meditation or reflection is clear from Ps. xix. 15 (14) and Lam. iii. 62. See below, on Ps. xcii. 4 (3). The addition of *Higgaion* to *Selah* here confirms the explanation already given of the latter word. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2). With this understanding of the terms, we may well say, to ourselves or others, in view of every signal providential retribution, especially where sin is conspicuously made its own avenger, *Higgaion Selah!*

18 (17.) *The wicked shall turn back even to hell*, to death, or to the grave, *all nations forgetful of God*. The enemies



of God and of his people shall be not only thwarted and repulsed but driven to destruction; and that not merely individuals but nations. For the meaning of *Sheol*, see above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) The figure of turning back, retreating, failing, is the same as in v. 4 (3) above. The idea expressed is not that of being turned directly into hell, but that of turning back, first to one's original position, and then beyond it, to the grave or hell. In the last clause there is an allusion to the implied charge of forgetfulness on God's part in v. 13 (12) above. He had not forgotten the 'poor innocents,' as they feared and as their enemies believed; but these very enemies had forgotten him, and must now abide the consequences of their own forgetfulness.—The future forms of this verse may have reference to the same things mentioned in the verse preceding as already past. It seems more natural, however, to explain them as a confident anticipation of results precisely similar to those which had already been produced by the same causes. As Jehovah had already caused the heathen to become their own destroyers, so he might be expected to renew the same judicial process in another case.

19 (18.) *For not forever shall the poor be forgotten, (and) the hope of the humble perish to eternity.* However long God may appear to be forgetful of his suffering people, even this seeming oblivion is to have an end. Still another allusion to the charge or imputation of forgetfulness implied in v. 13 (12) above. The difference between the readings *humble* and *afflicted* (ענינים and ענינים) is not essential, as the context shows that the humble meant are humble sufferers.

20 (19.) *Arise, Jehovah! Let not man, frail man, be strong. Let nations, or the heathen, be judged, and as a necessary consequence condemned, before thy face, in thy presence, at thy bar.* Here again, as in vs. 13, 14 (12, 13), the

expression of strong confidence is made the occasion of an earnest prayer. So far is an implicit trust from leading men to cast off fear and restrain prayer before God.—On the exhortation to arise, as from a state of previous inaction, see above, Ps. iii. 7 (6.) For the full sense of the word translated *man*, see above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4.)—*Let him not be strong*, i. e. let him not so appear, or so esteem himself. Let him have no occasion, by indulgence or prolonged impunity, to cherish this delusion or to practise this imposture. The absurdity of making man the stronger party in this strife with God is so preposterous, that God is summoned to arise for the purpose of exploding it.—To be judged, in the case of the wicked, is of course to be condemned. To be judged in God's presence, or at his tribunal, is of course to be condemned without appeal.

21 (20.)' *Set, place, or join, oh Jehovah, fear to them. Let nations know*, or then shall nations know, (*that*) *man*, not God, (*are*) *they*. *Selah*. God is entreated so to frighten them, that they may become conscious of their own insignificance and weakness.—The word translated *fear* is elsewhere used to signify a *razor*. Hence some would render the first clause, *apply the razor to them*, i. e. shave them, in allusion to the oriental feeling with respect to the beard. But this seems far-fetched, and the masoretic reading yields a better sense. The precise import of the first phrase seems to be, set fear as a guard over them (Ps. cxli. 3) or join it to them as a constant companion. The word translated *man* is still the same as in the foregoing verse, and was therefore intended to suggest the idea of human frailty as contrasted with divine omnipotence.

## PSALM X.

THE Psalmist complains of God's neglect and of the malice of his enemies, vs. 1—11. He prays that both these subjects of complaint may be removed, vs. 12—15. He expresses the most confident assurance that his prayer will be heard and answered, vs. 16—18.

The Septuagint and Vulgate unite this with the ninth psalm as a single composition. But each is complete in itself, and the remarkable coincidences even of expression only show that both were meant to form a pair or double psalm like the first and second, third and fourth &c. From the same facts it is clear, that this psalm, though anonymous, is like the ninth the work of David, and that both were probably composed about the same time.

1. *For what (cause), why, O Jehovah, wilt thou stand afar wilt thou hide at times (when we are) in trouble?* The question really propounded is, how this inaction can be reconciled with what was said of God in Ps. ix. 10 (9).—To *stand afar off*, is to act as an indifferent or at the most a curious spectator. *Wilt thou hide*, i. e. thy self or thine eyes, by refusing to see, as in Lev. xx. 4. 1 Sam. xii. 3. The futures imply present action and the prospect of continuance hereafter. The question is not merely why he does so, but why he still persists in doing so.—The singular phrase, *at times in trouble*, occurs only here and in Ps. ix. 10 (9), a strong proof of the intimate connexion of the two psalms, and perhaps of their contemporary composition.

tion.—This expostulation betrays no defect either of reverence or faith, but on the contrary indicates a firm belief that God is able, and must be willing, to deliver his own people. Such demands are never uttered either by skepticism or despair.

2. *In the pride of the wicked burns the sufferer; they are caught in devices which they have contrived.* This very obscure verse admits of several different constructions. The first verb sometimes means to persecute, literally to *burn after*, or pursue hotly. Gen. xxxi. 36. 1 Sam. xvii. 53. In one case it seems to have this meaning even without the preposition *after*. Lam. iv. 19. The sense would then be, *in the pride of the wicked he will persecute*, &c. But the collocation of the words seems to point out עָרַר as the subject, not the object, of the verb. The sufferer's burning may denote either anger or anguish, or a mixed feeling of indignant sorrow.—The adjective עָרַר means afflicted, suffering, whether from poverty or pain. *Poor* is therefore too specific a translation. In the Psalms this word is commonly applied to innocent sufferers, and especially to the people of God, as objects of malignant persecution. It thus suggests the accessory idea, which it does not formally express, of righteousness or piety.—In the last clause there is some doubt as to the subject of the first verb. If referred to the wicked, the sense will be, that they are taken in their own devices. If to the poor, that they are caught in the devices of the wicked. The first is favoured by the analogy of Ps. vii. 15—17 (14—16) and Ps. ix. 16, 17 (15, 16.) But the other agrees better with the context, as a description of successful wickedness.

3. *For a wicked (man) boasts of, (or simply praises) the desire of his soul, and winning, (i. e. when he wins) blesses, despises Jehovah.* This seems to be a description of the last stage of corruption, in which men openly defend or applaud their own vices, and im-

piously thank God for their dishonest gains and other iniquitous successes.—The preterite forms, *has praised* &c. denote that it always has been so, as a matter of familiar experience. *The desire of his soul* means his natural selfish inclination, his heart's lust. *And winning*, i. e. when he wins or gains his end, with special reference to increase of wealth. Hence the word is sometimes used to signify the covetous or avaricious grasper after wealth by fraud or force. The same participle, joined with a cognate noun, is rendered "greedy of gain" in Prov. i. 19 xv. 27, and "given to covetousness" in Jer. vi. 3. viii. 10. See also Hab. ii. 9, where the true sense is given in the margin of the English Bible.—He who gains an evil gain *blesses* (and) *despises Jehovah*, i. e. expresses his contempt of him by thanking him, whether in jest or earnest, for his own success. He blesses God, and thereby shows that he despises him. An illustrative parallel is Zech. xi. 4, 5. "Thus saith the Lord my God, Feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them and hold themselves not guilty, and they that sell them say, Blessed is the Lord, for I am rich." This parallel moreover shows that *blesses*, in the verse before us, does not mean *blesses himself*, as some suppose, but *blesses God*.

4. *A wicked (man), according to his pride, will not seek. There is no God (are) all his thoughts.* Pride is here expressed by one of its outward indications, loftiness of look, or as some suppose the Hebrew phrase to signify originally, elevation of the nose.—*Will not seek*, i. e. seek God, in prayer (Ps. xxxiv. 4), or in the wider sense of worship (Ps. xiv. 2), or in that of inquiring the divine will (Gen. xxv. 22), all which religious acts are at variance with the pride of the human heart.—*All his thoughts*, not merely his opinions, but his plans, his purposes, which is the proper meaning of the Hebrew word. The language of his life is, that there is no God.—Another construction of the first clause is as follows. *The wicked, according to*

*his pride, (says), He*, i. e. God, *will not require*, judicially investigate, and punish, as in Ps. ix. 13 (12), and in v. 13 below, where there seems to be a reference to the words before us, as uttered by the wicked man himself.—A third construction thus avoids the necessity of supplying *says*. ‘As to the wicked in his pride—He will not require, there is no God—are all his thoughts.’ This may be transferred into our idiom as follows. All the thoughts of the wicked in his pride are, that God will not require, or rather that there is no God. In favour of the first construction given is the fact that it requires nothing to be supplied like the second, and does not disturb the parallelism of the clauses like the third. Common to all is the imputation of proud self-confidence and practical atheism to the sinner.

5. *His ways are firm*, or will be firm, *in all time*, always. *A height*, or high thing, *(are) thy judgments from before him*, away from him, out of his sight. *(As for) his enemies he will puff at them*, as a natural expression of contempt, or *he will blow upon them*, i. e. blow them away, scatter them, with ease. This describes the prosperity and success of sinners, not only as a fact already familiar, but as something which is likely to continue. Hence the future forms, which indicate continuance hereafter, just as the preterites in v. 3 indicate actual experience.—The only other sense which can be put upon the first clause is, *his ways are twisted*, i. e. his actions are perverse. But the Chaldee paraphrase, the cognate dialects, and the analogy of Job xx. 21, are in favour of the rendering, *his ways are strong*, i. e. his fortunes are secure, his life is prosperous, which moreover agrees best with the remainder of the verse, as a description of the sinner’s outward state. Thus understood, the second clause describes him as untouched or unaffected by God’s providential judgments, and the third as easily ridding himself of all his human adversaries. Both together represent him as impregnable on all sides, in appear-



ance equally beyond the reach of God and man. (Compare Luke xviii. 2, 4.) As this immunity from danger, strictly understood, could exist only in appearance, the whole verse may be regarded as an expression of the sinner's own opinion rather than his true condition.

6. *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved ; to generation and generation, (I am one) who (shall) not (be) in evil,* or as the same Hebrew phrase is rendered in the English version of Ex. v. 19, *in evil case*, i. e. in trouble, in distress. This is a natural expression of the proud security engendered in the natural man by great prosperity. *He hath said*, implying that the cause has already been in operation long enough to show its natural effect. *In his heart*, to himself, in a spirit of self-gratulation and self-confidence. *To age and age*, throughout all ages or all generations. The strength of this expression shows that the speaker is not a real person, but the ideal type of a whole class. The sinner, who thus says in his heart, is not the sinner of one period or country, but the sinner of all times and places, one who never disappears or ceases thus to feel and act.—The form of the last clause in Hebrew is peculiar and emphatic. He does not simply say, *I shall never be in evil or adversity*, but *I am he, I am the man, who shall never be in evil*, as if the very supposition of such a contingency, however justified by general experience, would be not only groundless but absurd in this one case. (Compare Isaiah xlvii. 8—10.) There could scarcely be a stronger expression of the self-relying spirit of the sinner, as contrasted with the saints' implicit confidence in God's will and power, not only to preserve him from falling, but to raise him when he does fall.

7 (*Of*) *cursing his mouth is full and deceits and oppression. Under his tongue (are) trouble and iniquity.* He now gives a more particular description of the wicked man, begin

ning with his sins against his neighbour, and among these with his sins of word or speech. If this be a correct view of the whole verse, the *cursing*, mentioned in the first clause, is most probably false swearing, or the invocation of God's name, and imprecation of his wrath upon one's self, in attestation of a falsehood. This kind of cursing is closely connected with the fraud and violence which follow. The Hebrew word רָמָה, to which the older writers gave the sense of *fraud*, is now commonly explained to mean *oppression*, so that with the noun preceding it denotes injustice, injury to others, both by fraud and violence.—*Under the tongue* may have reference to the poison of serpents, or to the use of the tongue for speaking, as in Ps. lxvi. 17, where the same phrase occurs in the original, though not in the common version.—*Toil*, labour, trouble, endured by others as the consequence of his deceits and violence.—For the meaning of the last word in the verse, see above, on Ps. v. 6 (5).—*Oppression* is here reckoned among sins of speech, because the latter may be made the means of violent injustice, by tyrannical command, by unjust judgment, or by instigating others to deprive the victim of his rights. If only fraud had been referred to, this description of the sins committed with the tongue would have been palpably defective.

8. *He will sit in the lurking place of villages ; in the secret places he will slay the innocent ; his eyes for the sufferer will hide*, watch secretly, or lie in wait. From sins of word he now proceeds to those of deed or outward action. The wicked enemy is here represented as a robber. The futures, as in v. 5, imply that what is now is likely to continue. *Sitting* implies patient waiting for his prey or victim. *The lurking place*, the place where murderers and robbers usually lurk or lie in wait. Where such crimes are habitually practised, there is commonly some spot especially associated with them, either as the scene of the iniquity itself, or as a place of refuge and resort to those who perpetrate it.—The mention of *villages* is

no proof that the psalm relates to any specific case of lawless violence, but only that the Psalmist gives individuality to his description by traits directly drawn from real life. A slight change in the form of expression would convert it into a poetic simile. 'As the robber sits in the lurking-place of villages &c.' The verb *hide* has the same sense as in Prov. i. 11, 18.—The word translated *sufferer* (הַלֹּבֵד for הַיָּלֵד) is peculiar to this psalm, and was not improbably coined for the occasion, as a kind of enigmatical description, in which David seems to have delighted. A Jewish tradition makes it mean *thy host*, i. e. the church of God; but this, besides being forced in itself, is forbidden by the use of the plural in v. 10 below. Others derive it from an Arabic root, meaning to be black, dark, gloomy, sad, unhappy. A third hypothesis explains it as a compound of two Hebrew words, one meaning weak or sick, the other sad or sorrowful, and both together representing the object of the enemy's malice, in the strongest light, as a sufferer both in mind and body.

9. *He will lurk in the hiding-place as a lion in his den, he will lurk (or lie in wait) to catch the sufferer; he will catch the sufferer by drawing him into his net, or in drawing him (towards him) with his net.* That the preceding verse contains a simile, and not a description of the enemy as an actual robber, is here rendered evident by the addition of two new comparisons, applied to the same object. In the first clause he is compared to a lion, in the second to a hunter. See above, on Ps. vii. 16 (15). ix. 16 (15), and below, on Ps. xxxv. 7. lvii. 7 (6). The force of the futures is the same as in the foregoing verse.—*His den*, his shelter, covert, hiding-place. The Hebrew word is commonly applied to any temporary shed or booth, composed of leaves and branches. He lies in wait to seize the prey, and he succeeds, he accomplishes his purpose. A third possible construction of the last clause is: *in his drawing* (i. e. *when he draws*) *his net*. The whole verse, with the

one before it represents the wicked as employing craft no less than force for the destruction of the righteous.

10. *And bruised he will sink; and by (or in, i. e. into the power of) his strong ones fall the sufferers*, the victims. These are represented, in the first clause, by a collective singular, and in the second by a plural proper, that of the unusual word used in v. 8 above. Its peculiar etymology and form might be imitated in an English compound, such as *sick-sad*, *weak-sad*, or the like. By *his strong ones* some would understand the strong parts of the lion, teeth, claws &c.; others the same parts personified as warriors. But even in the foregoing verse, the figure of a lion is exchanged for that of a hunter, and this again gives place here to that of a military leader or a chief of robbers, thus insensibly returning to the imagery of v. 8. These numerous and rapid changes, although not in accordance with the rules of artificial rhetoric, add greatly to the life of the description, and are not without their exegetical importance, as evincing that the whole is metaphorical, a varied tropical exhibition of one and the same object, the combined craft and cruelty of wicked men, considered as the enemies of God and of his people. According to this view of the passage by *his strong ones* we may understand the followers of the hostile chief, those who help him and execute his orders, or the ideal enemy himself, before considered as an individual, but now resolved into the many individuals, of whom the class, which he represents, is really composed.

11. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hath hidden his face, he hath not seen, doth not see, and will not see, forever.* The opening words are the same, and have the same sense, as in v. 6 above. The three parallel clauses which follow all express the same idea, namely, that God takes no note of human offences. This is first expressed by the

figure of forgetfulness; then by that of deliberately refusing to see, as in v. 1 above; then by a literal and direct affirmation that he does not see, either the sufferings of his people or the malice of their enemies; and that this is not a transient or occasional neglect, but one likely to continue forever.

12. *Arise, Jehovah! Almighty (God), raise thy hand! Forget not sufferers (or the wretched)!* The impious incredulity, expressed in the preceding verse, is now made the ground of an importunate petition. God is besought to do away with the appearance of inaction and indifference. See above, on Ps. vii. 7 (6). *Raise thy hand*, exert thy power. The second name by which God is addressed (אֱלֹהִים) is one expressive of omnipotence, and may be correctly rendered by our phrase, *Almighty God*. As the name *Jehovah* appeals to his covenant relation to his people, as a reason for granting their requests, so this invokes his power as necessary to their deliverance and the vindication of his own honour from the imputation of forgetfulness cast upon him by his enemies. This imputation he is entreated, in the last clause, to wipe off by showing that he does remember. *Forget not* is, in this connexion, tantamount to saying, show that thou dost not forget. Here, as in Ps. ix. 13 (12), the margin of the Hebrew Bible reads (עֲנִיִּים) *meek* or *humble*, while the text has (עֲנִיִּים) *suffering* or *afflicted*. The *Kethib*, or textual reading, is regarded by the highest critical authorities, as the more ancient, and therefore, except in some rare cases, entitled to the preference.

13. *On what (ground) has the wicked contemned God, has he said in his heart, Thou wilt not require?* The question implies the sin and folly of the conduct described. The past tense suggests the inquiry why it has been suffered to go on so long. *Contemned*, i. e. treated with contempt. The refer-

ence is not to inward feeling merely, but to its external manifestation. The second clause shows how the feeling has been manifested. *Said in his heart*, is here repeated for the third time in this psalm. See vs. 6, 11, above.—The direct address to God in the last clause is peculiarly emphatic. The wicked man not only speaks irreverently of him, but insults him to his face.—*Thou wilt not require*. The Hebrew verb includes the ideas of investigation and exaction. Thou wilt not *inquire* into my conduct or *require* an account of it. See v. 4 above, and compare Ps. ix. 13 (12.) The whole verse contains an indirect expostulation or complaint of the divine forbearance towards such high-handed and incorrigible sinners.

14. *Thou hast seen* (this particular instance of iniquity); *for trouble*, the suffering occasioned by such sins, *and provocation*, that afforded by such sins, *thou wilt behold*, it is thy purpose and thy habit to behold it, *to give with thy hand* a becoming recompense, or *to give into thy hand*, i. e. to lay it up there in reserve, as something to be recompensed hereafter. *Upon thee the sufferer will leave* (his burden), will rely. An orphan, here put for the whole class of innocent and helpless sufferers, *thou hast been helping*; God has ever been a helper of the friendless, and may therefore be expected to do likewise now. The whole verse is an argument drawn from the general course of the divine administration. Hence the preterite and future forms. *Thou hast seen* in this case, for thou always *wilt see* in such cases.—For the meaning of *trouble* and *provocation*, see above, on Ps. vi. 8 (7). vii. 15 (14.)

15. *Break thou the arm*, destroy the power, *of the wicked, and the bad (man)*, or as to the bad man, *thou wilt seek for his wickedness (and) not find it*. This may either mean, thou wilt utterly destroy him and his wickedness, so that when sought for it cannot be found (Ps. xxxvii. 36,) or, thou wilt judi



cially investigate his guilt, and punish it till nothing more is left to punish. The Hebrew verb (פָּקַד) has then the same sense as in vs. 4, 13, above, and there is a direct allusion to the sinner's boast that God will not inquire into men's acts or require an account of them. There may be a latent irony or sarcasm, as if he had said, thou wilt find nothing, as he boasts, but in a very different sense; not because there is nothing worthy of punishment, but because there will be nothing left unpunished.

16. *Jehovah (is) king!* He is not dethroned, as his enemies imagine; he is still king, and will so remain, *perpetuity and eternity*, forever and ever. *Lost*, perished, *are nations*, the heathen, i. e. hostile nations, *from*, out of, *his land*, the Holy Land, the Land of Israel, the land of which he is the king in a peculiar sense, distinct from that of providential ruler. The Psalmist sees Jehovah still enthroned, not only as the sovereign of the world, but as the sovereign of his people. (See Num. xxiii. 21. Deut. xxxiii. 5.) The *nations* or *heathen* of this verse may be either literal or spiritual gentiles, (Jer. ix. 25. Ezek. xvi. 3.) The Psalm is so framed as to express the feelings of God's people in various emergencies. The preterite tense in the last clause represents the destruction of God's enemies as already past, not only on account of its absolute certainty, but because the process of destruction, although not completed, is begun and will infallibly continue. Here, as often elsewhere, earnest prayer is followed by the strongest expression of confidence and hope.

17. *The desire of the meek (or humble) thou hast heard, Jehovah!* Their desire is already accomplished. And this not merely once for all. *Thou wilt settle (or confirm) their heart*, i. e. dispell their fears and give them courage, by new assurances of favour and repeated answers to their prayers. *Thou wilt incline thine ear*, or make it attentive, cause it to

listen, to their future no less than their past petitions. The figure of a fixed or settled heart recurs more than once below See Ps. li. 12 (10). lvii. 8 (7). cxii. 7. The essential idea is that of a firm resolution, as opposed to timid doubt and vacillation.

18. *To judge*, or do justice to, *the orphan and the bruised* or oppressed. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) This clause seems properly to form a part of the preceding verse; thou wilt incline thine ear to judge &c. The remainder of the verse is a distinct proposition. *He shall not add* (or continue) *any longer to resist*, or defy, i. e. to set God at defiance. The subject of these verbs is placed last for the sake of greater emphasis. *Man*, frail man, *from the earth*, springing from it, and belonging to it. See Gen iii. 19. For the full sense of the word translated *man*, see above, on Ps. viii. 5 (4). ix. 20 (19,) and compare the whole prayer in the latter passage with the one before us. The sense here is, that weak and shortlived man shall not continue to insult and defy Almighty God. It implies a wish or prayer, but is in form a strong expression of the Psalmist's confident assurance that it will be so, and in connexion with the similar expressions of the two preceding verses, forms a worthy and appropriate close of the entire composition. The original of this verse is commonly supposed to exhibit an example of the figure called paronomasia, an intentional resemblance, both in form and sound, between two words of very different meaning. The words supposed to be so related here are those translated *to defy* (עָרַץ) and *earth* (אֶרֶץ). This peculiarity of form, if really designed and significant, is one which cannot be completely reproduced in any version. There is reason to suspect, however, that in this as in many other cases, the resemblance is fortuitous, like that which frequently occurs in a translation, without anything to match it in the original. E. g. in the Vulgate version of Gen. viii. 22, *æstus* and *æstas*, and in that of Gen. xii. 16, *oves et boves*.

## PSALM XI.

THE Psalmist is advised, by friends or foes, to escape by flight from the inextricable difficulties in which he finds himself involved, vs. 1—3. This he refuses to do, as inconsistent with his faith in the righteousness and grace of God, vs. 4—7. The logical relation of these parts makes the form of the whole somewhat dramatic, although this peculiarity is much less marked than in the second psalm. The language is not so much that of a historical person as of an ideal sufferer, representing the whole class of persecuted innocents. There is no specific reference to any incidents in David's life, although some of the images were probably suggested by his recollections, both of Saul's persecution and of Absalom's rebellion. The general resemblance of this psalm to that before it, and the special resemblance of v. 2 to Ps. x. 8, 9, may account for its position in the Psalter. The very difficulties of this psalm are proofs of its antiquity and strong corroborations of the title, which ascribes it to David.

1. *To the chief musician*, belonging to him as the performer, and *to David*, as the author. *In Jehovah I have trusted*, and do still trust. *How will (or can) ye say to my soul, Flee (to) your mountain (as) a bird?* The profession of confidence in God at the beginning is the ground of the following interrogation, which implies wonder and disapprobation. *How can ye say so?* really means, ye should not say so. The question seems to be addressed to timid or desponding friends, rather than to taunting and exulting enemies, as some suppose.—*To*

*my soul* does not simply mean *to me*, but so as to affect my feelings. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.) In the genuine text the verb *flee* is plural, because addressed to the whole class represented by the ideal sufferer in this case. Hence the frequent change of number throughout the psalm. See above, on Ps. x. 10. The exhortation to flee must be understood as implying that there is no longer any hope of safety.—*To your mountain*, as a customary place of refuge, not for birds, but for persecuted men. The comparison with a bird has no particular connexion with this clause, but is a kind of afterthought, suggesting the idea of a solitary helpless fugitive. (Compare 1 Sam. xxvi. 20 and Lam. iii. 52.) There may be an allusion to the words of the angel in Gen. xix. 17, as there certainly is to one or both these places in our Lord's exhortation to his followers, Matth. xxiv. 16.

2. *For lo, the wicked will tread* (i. e. bend) *the bow ; they have fixed their arrow on the string, to shoot in darkness at the straightforward* (upright) *of heart*. These are still the words of the advisers introduced in the preceding verse, assigning a reason for the advice there given.—*Tread the bow* ; see above, on Ps. vii. 13 (12.) *Will tread*, are about to tread, are treading. The preterite which follows refers to a later point of time. The speakers are supposed to describe what they see actually passing. 'They are bending the bow, (and now) they have fixed the arrow on the string.' The graphic vividness of the description is impaired, if not destroyed, by giving both the verbs a present form.—*Fixed*, i. e. in its proper place. The same verb occurs above, in Ps. vii. 13 (12.) *Make ready* is too vague in the case before us.—*In darkness*, in the dark, in secret, treacherously. See above, Ps. x. 8, 9.—*The straight of heart*, the upright and sincere. We do not use the adjective in this sense ; but we have the cognate substantive, *rectitude* which properly means straightness.

3. *For the pillars (or foundations) will be (are about to be) destroyed: what has the righteous done, i. e. accomplished?* The pillars or foundations are those of social order or society itself. These are said to be destroyed, when truth and righteousness prevail no longer, but the intercourse of men is governed by mere selfishness. The question in the last clause implies that the righteous has effected nothing, in opposition to the prevalent iniquity. The past tense represents this as a matter of actual experience, but as one which still continues. The substitution of any other form in the translation is gratuitous and ungrammatical. The true relation of the tenses is correctly given in the Prayer Book Version. *For the foundations will be cast down, and what hath the righteous done?*

4. *Jehovah (is) in his palace (or temple) of holiness; Jehovah (or as to Jehovah), in the heavens (is) his throne. His eyes behold, his eyelids prove the sons of men.* He is so exalted that he can see, and so holy that he must see and judge the conduct of his creatures. By an equally grammatical but less natural construction, the whole verse may be thrown into a single proposition. 'Jehovah in his holy temple, Jehovah whose throne is in heaven, his eyes, &c.'—For the meaning of the word translated *temple*, see above on Ps. v. 8 (7)—*Eyelids* are mentioned as a poetical parallel to *eyes*, being the nearest equivalent afforded by the language.—*Try* or *prove*, as if by seeing through them. With the whole verse compare Ps. cii. 20 (19.)

5. *Jehovah the righteous will prove, will prove the righteous, and the wicked and the lover of violence his soul hates.* The sentence might also be divided thus: *Jehovah will prove the righteous and the wicked, and the lover of violence his soul hates.* Different from both is the masoretic interpunction, which seems, however to be rather musical than grammatical or logical.—The divine proof or trial of the righteous implies

favour and approval like the knowledge spoken of in Ps. i 6; but in neither case is it expressed. *Violence*, including the ideas of injustice and cruelty. See above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.) *His soul has hated* and still hates. This is not simply equivalent to *he hates*, but denotes a cordial hatred. *Odit ex animo*. He hates with all his heart.

6. *He will rain on wicket (men) snares, fire and brimstone, and a raging wind, the portion of their cup.* The mixed metaphors show that the whole description is a tropical one, in which the strongest figures elsewhere used, to signify destruction as an effect of the divine wrath, are combined. *Rain* is a natural and common figure for any copious communication from above, whether of good or evil. *Snares* are a favourite metaphor of David for inextricable difficulties. See above, vii. 16 (15), ix. 16 (15), x. 9.—*Fire and brimstone* are familiar types of sudden and complete destruction, with constant reference to the great historical example of Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. xix. 24, and compare Ezek. xxxviii. 22. Job xviii. 15.—*Raging wind*, literally *wind* (or *blast*) of *furies*, is another natural but independent emblem of sudden irresistible inflictions. The second Hebrew word is elsewhere used for strong indignation (Ps. cxix. 53), and is once applied to the *ragings* (or *ravages*) of *famine*. (Lam. v. 10.)—*The portion of their cup*, or their cup-portion, something measured out for them to drink, according to the frequent Scriptural representation, both of God's wrath and favour, as a draught, or as the cup containing it. Compare Ps. xvi. 5. xxi. 5, with Matt. xx. 22, xxvi. 33. The meaning of the whole verse is that, notwithstanding the present security of the ungodly, they shall, sooner or later, be abundantly visited with every variety of destructive judgment.

7. *For righteous (is) Jehovah; righteousness he loves; the upright (man) shall his face behold.* The *for* suggests the



intimate connexion between God's judgments on the wicked and his favour to the righteous. The second clause is a necessary inference from the first. The nature of God determines his judgments and his acts. He who is righteous in himself cannot but approve of righteousness in others. The righteousness of others is in fact nothing more than conformity to his will and nature. Nor does he merely approve of righteousness in the abstract; he rewards it in the person of the righteous man. This idea is expressed in the last clause, which admits of several constructions. It may mean that *the upright shall behold his face*, i. e. enjoy his favourable presence, as in Ps. xvii. 15. But the collocation of the singular noun and the plural verb, with the analogy of v. 4 above, is in favour of a different construction: *his face shall behold* (or *does behold*) *the righteous*, i. e. view them with favour and affection. Because the original expression is not properly *his face*, but *their face* or *faces*, Luther explains this as a reason why God loves the righteous, to wit, because *their faces look upon (the) right*, or that which is right. Another construction, founded on the same fact, is, *the righteous shall behold* (it with) *their faces*. It is better, however, to regard this as an instance of that remarkable idiom in Hebrew, which applies to the One True God, verbs, nouns, and pronouns in the plural, and which some explain as a *pluralis majestaticus*, like that employed by kings at present, and others as a form of speech transferred from polytheism to the true religion. Most probably, however, it was intended to express the fulness of perfection in the divine nature, not without a mystical allusion to the personal distinction in the godhead. The most remarkable examples of this usage may be found in Gen. i. 26. iii. 22. xi. 7. Job xxxv. 10. Ps. lviii. 12. Ecc. xii. 1. Isai. vi. 8. liv. 5.—The *face* is here, like the *eyelids* in v. 4, a poetical equivalent to *eyes*, and the same parallelism reappears in Ps. xxxiv. 16, 17 (15, 16): 'the eyes

of Jehovah (are) towards the righteous ;' ' the *face* of Jehova (is) against evil-doers.'

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## PSALM XII.

THIS psalm consists of two parts easily distinguished ; a complaint with an expression of desire, and a promise with an expression of confidence and hope. The Psalmist laments the waning number of good men, v. 2 (1), and the abounding of iniquity, v. 3 (2), to which he desires and expects that God will put an end, vs. 4, 5 (3, 4). In answer to this prayer, he receives an assurance of protection and deliverance for the righteous, v. 6 (5), on which he rests as infallibly certain, v. 7 (6), and consoles himself under present trials. v. 8 (7).

There seems to be no specific reference to the persecution of the Jews by the Gentiles, or of David by Absalom or Saul. The contrast exhibited is rather that between the righteous and the wicked as a class, and the psalm seems designed to be a permanent vehicle of pious sentiment for the church or chosen people under persecution by malignant enemies. It contains an unusual number of difficult expressions in proportion to its length ; but these are not of such a nature as to make its general import doubtful or obscure.

1. *To the Chief Musician, on the eighth (or octave), a Psalm of David.* This title is identical with that of the sixth Psalm, except that *Neginoth* is here omitted.

2 (1.) *Save, Jehovah, for the merciful* (or the object of divine mercy) *ceaseth, for the faithful fail from (among) the sons of men.* The adjective *חַסִּיד*, whether taken in an active or a passive sense, is descriptive of the pious or godly man. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) The preterite form of the verbs (has ceased, have failed,) represents the fearful process as already begun. The word rendered *faithful* in the last clause may also have the abstract sense of truth, fidelity. See below, Ps. xxxi. 24 (23), and compare Isai. xxvi. 2. In either case, the whole verse is a strong hyperbolical description of the small number of good men left in the community, and their consequent exposure to the malice of the wicked. Such expressions, as Luther well suggests, are too familiar in the dialect of common life to be mistaken or produce perplexity.

3 (2.) *Vanity*, i. e. falsehood, *they will speak*; as they now do, so will they persist in doing; *(each) man with his neighbour*, not merely with another man, but with his friend, his brother, towards whom he was particularly bound to act sincerely. Compare Eph. iv. 25. *A lip of smoothness, or of smooth things*, i. e. flattering. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) This may be connected either with what goes before or with what follows. 'They speak falsehood, each to his neighbour, with a flattering lip.' Or, '(With) a flattering lip (and) with a double heart will they speak.' *A heart and a heart*, i. e. a double heart, as *a stone and a stone* means "divers weights." Deut. xxv. 13. By a double heart we are probably to understand, not mere dissimulation or hypocrisy, but inconsistency and instability of temper, which leads men to entertain opposite feelings towards the same object. Compare the description of the "doubleminded man" in James i. 8.

4 (3.) *May Jehovah destroy all lips of smoothness*, flattering lips, *(and every) tongue speaking great things*, i. e. speaking

proudly, boasting. The form of the Hebrew verb is one commonly employed to express an optative meaning; but as this form is often poetically used for the future proper, it might be rendered here, *Jehovah will destroy*. There is no inconsistency between the flattering lips and the boastful tongue, because the subject of the boasting, as appears from what follows, is the flattery or deceit itself. As if he had said, Jehovah will destroy all flattering lips, and every tongue that boasts of their possession or use. For an example of such boasting, see Isaiah xxviii. 15.

5 (4.) *Who have said, By our tongues will we do mightily, our lips (are) with us, who is lord to us, or over us?* This is an amplified specification of the phrase *speaking great things* in the preceding verse. *By our tongues*, literally, as to, with respect to our tongues. The idea of agency or instrumentality is suggested by the context. *Do mightily*, exercise power: show ourselves to be strong. *Our lips are with us* may either mean they are our own, at our disposal, or, they are on our side. The idea of the whole verse is, by our own lips and our tongues we can accomplish what we will.

6 (5.) *From the desolation of the wretched, from the sighing of the poor, now will I arise, shall Jehovah say, I will place in safety him that shall pant for it.* The preposition *from* has a causal meaning, because of, on account of. *The wretched*, afflicted, sufferers. See above, on Ps. ix. 13 (12). *I will arise*; see above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7). The future, *shall Jehovah say* implies that the promise is not yet uttered, much less fulfilled. An analogous use of the same form of the same verb runs through some of the prophecies and especially the later chapters of Isaiah.—The last clause is obscure and may also be translated, ‘from him that puffeth at him,—‘him at whom they puff’—‘him whom they would blow away,’ &c. The most

probable meaning is the one first given, according to which the verse contains a promise of deliverance to those who especially desire and need it.

7 (6.) *The sayings of Jehovah are pure sayings, silver purged in a furnace of earth, refined seven times.* The Psalmist does not use the term commonly translated *words*, but one derived from the verb to *say*, with obvious allusion to the use of the verb itself in the preceding verse. What Jehovah there says, the promises there given, are here declared to be true without any mixture of mistake or falsehood. This is expressed by the favourite figure of pure metallic ore. The idea of extreme or perfect purity is conveyed by the idiomatic phrase, *purified seven times*, i. e. repeatedly, or *sevenfold*, i. e. completely. Compare Dan. iii. 19. The general meaning of the verse is clear, but it contains one phrase which is among the most doubtful and disputed in the whole book. This is the phrase אֶרֶץ בְּכִיּוֹר. To the common version above given, *in a furnace of earth*, and to another somewhat like it, *purged in a furnace as to* (i. e. *from*) *the earth*, or earthy particles, it has been objected, that אֶרֶץ never means earth as a material. Some avoid this difficulty by translating, *in a furnace on the earth* (or *ground*), or, *in the workshop* (laboratory) *of the earth*, i. e. the mine; but this is not the place where ores are purified. It is further objected to all these translations, that they attach a supposititious meaning to the noun בְּכִיּוֹר. It is therefore explained by some as a variation of בָּנִי, lord or master, and the whole clause made to mean, *purified silver of a lord of the earth*, i. e. refined not for ordinary use but for that of some great prince or noble. The obscurity which overhangs the meaning of this clause is less to be regretted as the main idea must, on any supposition still be that of unusual and perfect purity.

8 (7.) *Thou, Jehovah, wilt keep them; thou wilt guard*

*him from this generation to eternity*, i. e. forever. In the first clause, though not in the second, the pronoun *thou* is expressed in Hebrew, and may therefore be regarded as emphatic. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. iii. 4 (3.) Thou and no other, or, thou without the aid of others, wilt preserve them. The plural pronoun in the first clause, and the singular in the second, refer to the same persons, viz. the sufferers mentioned in v. 7 (6). By a license common in the psalms, they are first spoken of as a plurality, and then as an ideal person. See above, on Ps. x. 10. *This generation*, this contemporary race of wicked men, with reference perhaps to the description, in v. 2 (1), of the disproportion between these and the righteous. *Forever*, as long as the necessity or danger lasts, so long shall the injured innocent experience the divine protection.

9 (8.) *Round about will the wicked walk.* This may either mean that they shall walk at liberty and have full license, or that they shall encompass and surround the righteous. Compare Ps. iii. 7 (6.) The other clause is one of the most doubtful and disputed in the whole book. The particle כִּי may denote either time or resemblance and the noun זָלוּת, which occurs no where else, has been variously explained to mean a storm, an earthquake, vileness or contempt, &c. Among the different senses put upon the whole phrase are the following. ‘When the vileness (or vilest) of men is exalted.’ ‘Like the rising of a storm upon the sons of men.’ ‘When they rise (or are exalted) there is shame (or disgrace) to the sons of men.’ ‘When disgrace arises to the sons of men.’ ‘Like exaltation is disgrace to the sons of man.’ In favour of this last it has been urged, that it gives to each word its most natural and obvious sense, and that it closes with a prospect of relief, and not with an unmitigated threatening, which would be at variance with the usage of the Psalms. The meaning of the verse is then, that although the wicked are now in the ascend-



ant and the righteous treated with contempt, this disgrace is really an exaltation, because only external and in man's judgment, not in God's, who will abundantly indemnify his people for the dishonor which is put upon them. The unusual and almost unintelligible form, in which this idea is expressed, is supposed to agree well with David's fondness for obscure and enigmatical expressions. See above, on Ps. v. 1 and vii. 1.

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## PSALM XIII

THIS psalm consists of a complaint, vs. 2, 3 (1, 2), a prayer for deliverance, vs. 4, 5 (3, 4), and an expression of strong confidence that God will grant it, v. 6 (5, 6).

There is no trace of a specific reference to any particular period in the life of David, or to any persecution of the ancient Israel by heathen enemies. The psalm appears to be intended as a vehicle of pious sentiment, for the church at large, and individual believers, under any affliction of the sort here described, namely, that arising from the spiteful hostility of wicked men. The tone, as in several of the foregoing psalms, varies from that of deep depression to that of an assured hope, connected, as in actual experience, by one of strong desire and fervent supplication.

1. *To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David.* This title differs from that of the fourth psalm, as the title of the twelfth does from that of the sixth, to wit, by the omission of מְבַרְכֵי

2 (1). *Until when, how long, Jehovah, wilt thou forget me forever? Until when wilt thou hide thy face from me?* The refusal or delay of the divine help is here, as often elsewhere, represented by the figures of forgetfulness and an averted countenance. See above, on Ps. ix. 13, 19 (12, 18). x. 11, 12. The apparent solecism of combining *how long* with *forever* may be avoided by supposing two interrogations, *how long? forever?* It may also be avoided by giving to נָצַח the sense of continuously, uninterruptedly. But even the obvious construction, which is more agreeable to usage and the masoretic interpunction of the sentence, may be justified as a strong but natural expression of the conflict between sense and faith. To the eye of sense and reason, the abandonment seemed final; but faith still prompted the inquiry, *how long*, which implies that it was not to last forever. As if he had said: how long wilt thou persist in the purpose of forgetting me forever?

3 (2.) *Till when, how long, shall I place (or lay up) counsels, plans, in my soul, grief in my heart by day? Till when shall my enemy be high above me?* The idea in the first clause seems to be that of accumulating methods or expedients of escape, as in a store-house, without finding any that will answer the purpose. The same figure may be continued in the second clause: (how long shall I lay up) sorrow in my heart? The sense is then that the multiplication of devices only multiplies his sorrows. Or the figure of laying up may be confined to the first clause, and the noun *grief* governed by a verb understood: (how long shall I feel) sorrow in my heart. The common version, *having sorrow*, conveys the same idea, but supplies a verb unknown to the Hebrew and its cognate languages.—*By day* is elsewhere put in opposition to *by night*, as for instance in Ps. 1, 2 above. Here it may possibly mean *all day*, but more probably means *every day, daily*, as in Ezek. xxx. 16.—*Be high*: the original expression is a verb alone

How long shall my enemy soar or tower above me, i. e. be superior, prevail? This clause determines the precise form of suffering complained of, namely, that occasioned by the malice of a powerful persecutor or oppressor. In all such cases Saul was no doubt present to the mind of David, but only as a specimen or type of the whole class to which the psalm relates.

4 (3). *Look, hear me, Jehovah, my God, lighten my eyes lest I sleep the death.* The complaint is now followed by a corresponding prayer. In allusion to the hiding of the face in v. 2 (1), he now beseeches God to look towards him, or upon him, to show by his acts that he has not lost sight of him. As he before complained of God's forgetting him, so here he prays that he will hear and answer him. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4). The idea of Jehovah as a God in covenant with his people is brought out still more fully by the phrase *my God*, i. e. one on whom I have a right to call, with a well-founded hope of being heard. See above on Ps. iii. 8 (7).—*Enlighten my eyes*, or make them shine, is by some understood to mean, dispel my doubts and extricate me out of my perplexities, with reference to the plans or counsels mentioned in the preceding verse. Others with more probability suppose an allusion to the dimness of the eyes produced by extreme weakness or approaching death, and understand the prayer as one for restoration and deliverance from imminent destruction. Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29, where the relief of Jonathan's debility occasioned by long fasting is described by saying that his eyes were enlightened.—*Lest I sleep (in) death*, or *lest I sleep the (sleep of) death*, as in the common version. Compare the beautiful description of death as a *sleep of perpetuity*, a perpetual or everlasting sleep, in Jer. li. 39, 57.

5 (4.) *Lest my enemy say, I have overpowered him (and) my adversaries shout when I am shaken*, or because I shall be

*shaken*.—The verb יִכְלֶהוּ strictly means, *I have been able*. The unusual construction with a pronoun (יִכְלֶהוּ) cannot be literally rendered into English, but the meaning evidently is, *I have been able (to subdue) him, or, I have been strong (in comparison with) him*. As to the combination of the singular and plural (*enemy and adversaries*), see above, on Ps. x. 11 (10).—*Shout*, i. e. for joy, or in a single word, *triumph*. See above, on Ps. ii. 11.—The last verb (אָמַרְטָ) has the same sense as in Ps. x. 6, viz. that of being moved or cast down from one's firm position.

6 (5, 6). *And I in thy mercy have trusted ; let my heart exult in thy salvation ; I will sing to Jehovah, for he hath done me good*, or acted kindly towards me. The transition indicated by the phrase *and I*, is the same as in Ps. ii. 6 above. Such are the enemies and dangers which environ me, *and (yet) I have trusted in thy mercy*. The past tense of the verb describes the trust, not as something to be felt hereafter, or as just beginning to be felt at present, but as already entertained and cherished, and therefore likely to be still continued. I have trusted, and do still trust, and will trust hereafter.—There is a beautiful gradation in the clauses of this verse. First a fact is stated : 'I have trusted in t<sup>h</sup>y mercy ;' then a desire is expressed : 'let my heart rejoice in thy salvation ;' then a fixed purpose is announced : 'I will sing unto Jehovah.' The reason annexed to this determination or engagement implies an assured expectation of a favourable issue. As if he had said : I know the Lord will treat me kindly, and I am resolved to praise him for so doing.—*In thy salvation*, not merely on account of it, but in the contemplation, the possession, the enjoyment of it. See above, Ps. v. 12 (11). ix. 3 (2.) The verb נָמַלְ, which occurs above in Ps. vii. 5 (4), corresponds most nearly to the English *treat*, in the sensé of dealing with or acting towards ; but when absolutely used, as here, almost inva-

riably has a good sense, and specifically means to treat well or deal kindly with a person. The idea of requital or reward, which is frequently attached to it in the English version, is suggested, if at all, not by the word itself but by the context.

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The Septuagint has an additional clause, which is retained in the Prayer Book version and thus rendered: *yea I will praise the name of the Lord most Highest*. The words are not found in any Hebrew manuscript.

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## P S A L M X I V .

WE have first a description of human depravity as universal, vs. 1—3 ; then a confident anticipation of destructive judgments on the incorrigibly wicked, vs. 4—6, and an earnest wish for the speedy deliverance of God's elect from the evils of their natural condition and from the malice of their unconverted enemies, v. 7.

There seems to be no reference to any particular historical occasion. The psalm was, no doubt, originally written to express the feelings of God's people, in all times and places, with respect to the original depravity of all men and the obstinate persistency in evil of the greater number. The points of resemblance and of difference between this psalm and the fifty-third will be considered in the exposition of the latter.

1. *To the Chief Musician, by David. The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They have done corruptly, they have done abominably (in) deed (or act); there is none doing good.* Sin is constantly held up to view in Scripture as the height of folly, and the sinner as the fool by way of eminence. See Gen. xxxiv. 7. Jos. vii. 15. Ps. xxxix. 9 (8.) The term is here collective and applied to the whole race, as appears from the plurals which follow, and the negative statement in the last clause. The preterites include the present, but suggest the additional idea, that the truth here asserted is the result of all previous experience and observation.—*In his heart*, to himself, if not to others, as above, in Ps. x. 11. That the error is one of the affections, and not merely of the understanding, is supposed by some to be implied in the use of the word *heart*, which is often used however to denote the mind or soul in general.— $\neg$  is properly a noun and means nonentity or non-existence: ‘nothing of God,’ or ‘no such thing as God.’ It cannot be explained as a wish—‘No God!’ i. e. oh that there were no God!—because  $\neg$  in usage always includes the substantive verb, and denies the existence, or at least the presence, of the person or thing to which it is prefixed. This is also clear from the use of the same word in the last clause, where its sense is unambiguous.—The addition of the word *act* or *deed* shows that the atheism described is not merely theoretical but practical.—There is obvious allusion, in this verse, to the description of the general antediluvian corruption in Gen. vi. 12. This makes it the more certain that the description here was not intended either for Jews or Gentiles, as such, but for wicked men of either class, and that Paul’s application of the words, in Rom. iii. 10, 12, is perfectly legitimate, and not a mere accommodation of the Psalmist’s language to another purpose.

2. *Jehovah from heaven has looked down on the sons of man,*



*is see if there were (one) acting wisely, seeking God.* While the fool denies the being of a God, Jehovah's eye is on him and his fellow-men. Yet even that omniscient eye can discern no exception to the general depravity and folly. The earnestness of the inspection is suggested by the verb in the first clause, which originally means to lean or bend over, and is peculiarly appropriate to the act of one gazing intently down upon a lower object. The force of the preterite tense is the same as in the preceding verse. The inquiry has been made already and proved fruitless. It is no longer a doubtful question, but one definitively settled.—*Acting wisely*, in contrast to the atheistical folly mentioned in v. 1. The test of wisdom is in seeking God, whether in the general religious sense of seeking his favour and communion with him, or in the special sense of seeking proofs of his existence. As if he had said: even those who think there is no God, if they were wise, would seek one; but these fools take pleasure in the hideous negation. The image presented in this verse may be compared with that in Gen. vi 12. xi. 5. xviii. 21. See also Ps. xxxiii. 13, 14.

3. *The whole has apostatised; together they have putrefied; there is none doing good; there is not even one.* Total and universal corruption could not be more clearly expressed than by this accumulation of the strongest terms, in which, as Luther well observes, the Psalmist, not content with saying *all*, adds *together*, and then negatively, *no not one*. It is plain that he had no limitation or exception in his mind, but intended to describe the natural condition of *all men*, in the widest and most unrestricted sense.—*The whole*, not merely *all* the individuals as such, but the entire race as a totality or ideal person. *The whole (race) has departed*, not merely from the right way, but from God, instead of seeking him, as intimated in v. 4. *Together*, not merely altogether or without exception, but in union and by one decisive act or event—The etymological

import of the verb נִאֶחֶז is to turn sour, to spoil. It is applied to moral depravation not only here but in Job. xv. 16. The Septuagint version of these words is quoted by Paul in Rom. iii. 12, as a part of his scriptural description of human depravity, the rest of which is taken from Ps. v. 10 (9), x. 7. xxxvi. 2 (1.) cxl. 4. Isai. lix. 7, 8. Under the false impression, that he meant to quote a single passage, some early Christian copyist appears to have introduced the whole into the Septuagint version of this Psalm, where it is still found in the Codex Vaticanus, as well as in the Vulgate, and even in one or two Hebrew manuscripts of later date. The interpolation is also retained in the Anglican Psalter. It is evident, however, that the Apostle's argument is strengthened by the fact of his proofs being drawn not from one but several parts of the Old Testament.

4. *Do they not know, all (these) workers of iniquity, eating my people (as) they eat bread, (and) on Jehovah call not?* The question is elliptical; the object of the verb must be supplied from the context. Do they not know that they are thus corrupt and estranged from God, and therefore objects of his wrath? Is it because they do not know this or believe it, that they thus presume to oppress and persecute his people? The figure of devouring occurs often elsewhere, e. g. Prov. xxx. 14. Mic. iii. 3. Hab. iii. 14. See below, on Ps. xxvii. 2 (1.) *As they eat bread* may either mean for their support—living on the plunder and oppression of my people; or for pleasure—feeding on them with delight; or with indifference and as little sense of guilt as when they take their ordinary food.—*Call not on Jehovah*, do not worship him, as they were before said not to seek him, nor even to acknowledge his existence, all which are periphrastical descriptions of the wicked as a class. The general description of their wickedness is here exchanged for a specific charge, that of persecuting the righteous. The mention of two classes here is not at variance with the uni

versal terms of the preceding context, nor does it render any limitation of those terms necessary. All men are alike "children of wrath," but some are elected to be "vessels of mercy," and thereby become objects of hatred to the unconverted mass who still represent the race in its apostacy from God.—*My people* does not make it necessary to regard these as the words of God himself, who is no where introduced as speaking in this psalm, and is spoken of in the third person in the very next clause. The Psalmist, as a member of the body, calls it his, and the same form of expression occurs elsewhere. See 1 Sam. v. 10. Isai. iii. 12. liii. 8. Micah iii. 3.—For the meaning of the phrase, *workers of iniquity*, see above, on Ps. v. 6 (5).

5. *There have they feared a fear, for God (is) in the righteous generation.* A later period is now present to his view. They who seemed incapable of fear have now begun to be afraid at last. *There*, without any change of place or outward situation. Where they before denied the being of a God, even there they have begun to fear. See below, on Ps. xxxvi. 13 (12.) The reason is given in the next clause. God, though denied by them, exists and is present and will manifest his presence by the protection and deliverance of his people. *Feared a fear*, is a common Hebrew idiom for greatly feared, were sore afraid.—*Generation*, contemporary race, as in Ps. xii. 8 (7.)

6. *The plan (or counsel) of the sufferer (the afflicted) ye will shame, because Jehovah is his refuge.* The workers of iniquity are here addressed directly. The sufferer is the persecuted innocent. *Poor* is too restricted a translation. See above, on Ps. ix. 13, 19 (12, 18). The plan or counsel is described in the last clause, to wit, that of trusting in Jehovah. This very trust is an object of contempt to the wicked. Until they are made to fear by the manifestation of God's presence with his people, they will continue to despise it. The Psalmist

here seems to revert to the interval which should precede the divine interposition. As if he had said: you will one day be made to fear, but in the mean time you will shame the counsel of the poor. Some however give תבִּישׁוּ its usual sense of putting to shame, disappointing, and understand the clause as an ironical concession: you may shame his counsel if you can.

7. *Who will give out of Zion salvation to Israel, in Jehovah's returning the captivity of his people? Let Jacob exult, let Israel joy!* The phrase *who will give* is an idiomatic optative in Hebrew, equivalent to *oh that* with a verb, and *oh for* with a noun in English. *Oh for the salvation of Israel!* Or, *oh that the salvation of Israel* (might come) *out of Zion*, as the earthly residence of God and seat of the theocracy. The same local designation is connected with the prayer or promise of divine help, in Ps. iii. 5 (4), xx. 3 (2), cxxviii. 5. cxxxiv. 3. (Compare Ps. xxviii. 2.) This shows that the Psalm does not belong to the period of the Babylonish exile, and that the captivity referred to is not literal, but a metaphorical description of distress, as in the case of Job (xlii. 10). The same idea is elsewhere expressed by the figure of confinement and incarceration (Ps. cxlii. 8. Is. xlii. 7. xlix. 9.) The sense remains essentially the same in this case, whether the verb *return* be transitive or intransitive. Most interpreters prefer the former sense and understand the clause to mean, 'in Jehovah's *bringing back* the captivity of his people.' But as שָׁבַב in every other combination means to *come back*, and, like other verbs of motion, often governs a noun of place directly (Ex. iv. 19; 20. Num. x. 36), it is better to understand the words as meaning that the salvation wished for would consist in God's revisiting his captive or afflicted people. This sense is also admissible, if not necessary, in such places as Deut. xxx. 3. Ps. lxxxv. 5 (4), Isai. lii. 8. Hos. vi. 11. Nah. ii. 3 (2).—*Let Jacob shout (for joy)!* This is both an exhortation and a wish, but

the latter is the prominent idea, as the parallelism of the clauses shows. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come!* corresponds exactly to, *May Jacob exult, may Israel be glad!* The common version is forbidden by the optative form (יִגַּל) of the Hebrew verb, and by the masoretic interpunction, which connects *in the Lord's returning &c.*, not with what follows as a specification of time, but with what goes before as an explanatory clause. The whole may be paraphrased as follows. 'Oh that Jehovah, from his throne in Zion, would grant salvation to his people, by revisiting them in their captive and forsaken state, and that occasion of rejoicing might be thus afforded to the church!' Or more closely thus: 'Oh may Israel's salvation (soon) come forth from Zion, in Jehovah's return to the captivity of his people! (In such a restoration) may Jacob (soon have reason to) exult and Israel (to) triumph'

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## PSALM XV.

THIS Psalm teaches the necessity of moral purity as a condition of the divine protection. It first propounds the question who shall be admitted to God's household and the privileges of its inmates, v. 1. This is answered positively, v. 2, and negatively, v. 3, then positively again, v. 4, and negatively, v. 5. The last clause of the last verse winds up by declaring, that the character just described shall experience the protection tacitly referred to in the first verse. As the contrast exhibited in this psalm and the fourteenth may account for its position in the Psalter, so its obvious resemblance to the

twenty-fourth makes it not improbable that their historical occasion was identical.

1. *A Psalm by David. Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tent? who shall dwell in thy hill of holiness?* The holy hill is Zion, as in Ps. ii. 6; the tent is the tabernacle which David pitched there for the ark, when he removed it from Gibeon. (2 Sam. vi. 17. 1 Chron. xv. 1. xvi. 1, 39. 2 Chron. i. 3—5.) Both together signify the earthly residence of God. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4). The idea is not that of frequenting Zion as a place of worship, but of dwelling there, as a guest or as an inmate of God's family. The same figure for intimate communion with Jehovah, and participation of his favour, reappears in Ps. xxiii. 6. xxvii. 4, 5. xxiv. 3. lxi. 5. lxxv. 5 (4). lxxxiv. 5 (4). So too in Eph. ii. 19, believers are described as members of God's family (*οἰκεῖται τοῦ θεοῦ*.)

2. *Walking perfect, and doing right, and speaking truth, in his heart.* The Psalmist, speaking in behalf of God, here answers his own question. The only person who can be admitted to domestic intercourse with God is one walking perfect &c. *Walking* is put for the habitual course of life. (See above, on Ps. i. 1.) *Perfect*, complete, as to all essential features of the character, without necessarily implying perfection in degree. The form of expression seems to be borrowed from Gen. xvii. 1. A remarkably analogous expression is that used by Horace: *integer vitæ scelerisque purus*. The next phrase, *doing right*, practising rectitude, may be either a synonymous parallel to the first, or a specification under it, parallel to *speaking truth*. The general idea of walking perfect is then resolved into the two particular ideas of doing right and speaking truth. *In his heart*, i. e. sincerely, as opposed to outward show or hypocritical profession. This phrase seems to qualify not merely what precedes, *speaking truth*, but the whole de



scription, as of one who sincerely and internally, as well as outwardly, leads a blameless life by doing right and speaking truth.

3. (*Who*) *hath not slandered with his tongue, (who) hath not done his neighbour harm, and a scandal hath not taken up against his neighbour.* The positive description of the foregoing verse is now followed by a negative one. (Compare Ps i. 1, 2.) The social virtues are insisted on, and their opposites excluded, because they are apt to be neglected by hypocrites, against whom this psalm is directed. The past tense of the verbs denotes a character already marked and determined by the previous course of life. The verb רגל seems strictly to denote the act of busy or officious tale-bearing. There seems to be an allusion to Lev. xix. 16. *With his tongue*, literally *on his tongue*, as we say to *live on*, i. e. by means of any thing, an idiom which occurs in Gen. xxvii. 40. (Compare Isai. xxxviii. 16.) The next clause adds deed to word, as in the foregoing verse. *Scandal*, reproach, defamatory accusation. The verb נשא is by some explained as meaning to take up upon the lips (Ps. xvi. 4), and then to utter or pronounce. Others give it the same sense as in Gen. xxxi. 17 where נשא על means to lift up upon, i. e. to burden. The idea then is, that he has not helped to load his neighbour with reproach. *Friend and neighbour* does not mean any other man, but one sustaining a peculiarly intimate relation, such as that of the members of the chosen people to each other. See above, on Ps. xii. 3 (2).

4. *Despised in his eyes (is) a reprobate, and the fearers of Jehovah he will honour; he hath sworn to his own hurt and will not change.* The Chaldee Paraphrase, followed by the Prayer Book version, makes the first clause descriptive of humility. He is despised in his own eyes (and) rejected. But the

parallelism with the next clause shows that a contrast was designed between his estimation of two opposite classes, and as one of these is *those who fear Jehovah*, the other must be represented by נִמְאָס, *rejected*, i. e. by Jehovah, reprobate. The future form, as usual, suggests the idea of a present act repeated or continued in the future. He honours, and will still persist in honouring, the fearers of Jehovah. The Septuagint and Vulgate explain לְחָרֵץ *to the neighbour*, and some modern versions *to the bad (man)*. But the sense is determined by the obvious allusion to Lev. v. 4: "if a soul swear to do evil (לְחָרֵץ) or to do good," i. e. whether to his own advantage or the contrary. So here the phrase must mean 'he hath sworn to injure (himself)' not designedly, but so as to produce that effect. *He will not change*, literally, exchange, i. e. substitute something else for what he has promised.

5. *His silver he hath not given for usury, and a bribe against a guiltless (person) hath not taken. Doing these (things) he shall not be moved forever.* In Hebrew as in French, silver is put for money in general. There is obvious allusion to the frequent prohibition in the Mosaic law, not of lending money upon interest for commercial purposes, a practice then unknown, but of usurious lending to the poor, and especially to poor Israelites. See Ex. xxii. 24. Lev. xxv. 37. Deut. xxiii. 20, and compare Prov. xxviii. 8. Ezek. xviii. 8. The taking of judicial bribes is also expressly forbidden in Ex. xxiii. 8. Deut. xvi. 19. xxvii. 25. The masoretic interpunction of this sentence seems to be merely rhythmical or musical, as in Ps. xi. 5. The words *doing these* cannot be separated from what follows without destroying the sense. This last clause is an answer to the question in v. 1, but with a change of form, implying that admission to God's household was itself security against all danger. Compare Ps. lv. 23 (22) *For the sense of שָׁמַר, see above, on Ps. x. 6. xiii. 5.*

## PSALM XVI.

A SUFFERER, in imminent danger of death, expresses his strong confidence in God, v. 1, as the sole source and author of his happiness, v. 2, and at the same time his attachment to God's people, v. 3, his abhorrence of all other gods, v. 4, his acquiescence in God's dealings with him, vs. 5, 6, and his assured hope of future safety and blessedness, vs. 7—11.

The Psalm is appropriate to the whole class of pious sufferers, of which Christ is the most illustrious representative. It is only in him, therefore, that some parts of it can be said to have received their highest and complete fulfilment. This will be shown more fully in the exposition of the ninth and tenth verses.

1. *Michtam of David. Preserve me, oh God, for I have trusted in thee.* Some explain *Michtam* as a compound term; but it is most probably a simple derivative of a verb meaning to *hide*, and signifies a mystery or secret. The similar word *Michtab* in the title of Hezekiah's psalm (Isai. xxxviii. 9) is probably an imitation of the form here used, or at least involves an allusion to it. It seems to be substituted for the usual terms *song*, *psalm*, &c. not only here but in the titles of Ps. lv—lx. It probably indicates the depth of doctrinal and spiritual import in these sacred compositions. The derivation from a noun meaning *gold* is much less probable.—This verse may be said to contain the sum and substance of the whole psalm, and is merely amplified in what follows. The prayer, *Keep, save, or*

*preserve me*, implies actual suffering or imminent danger, while the last clause, *I have trusted in thee*, states the ground of his assured hope and confident petition. The verb used is one that seems especially appropriate to the act of seeking shelter under some overshadowing object. See Judges ix. 15. Isai. xxx. 2. Ps. lvii. 2 (1.) lxi. 5 (4.) The preterite form implies that this is no new or sudden act, but one performed already. He not only *trusts* in God at present, but *has trusted* him before. Compare Ps. vii. 2 (1.) xi. 1.

2. *Thou hast said to Jehovah, The Lord (art) thou ; my good (is) not besides thee (or beyond thee.)* The verb in the first clause has the form of a second person feminine, which some regard as an abbreviation of the first-person, אָמַרְתָּ for אָמַרְתִּי and translate accordingly, *I have said*. But this neither agrees so well with usage, nor affords so good a sense as the old construction which supplies as the object of address the same that is expressed in Ps. xlii. 6 (5), 12 (11). xliii. 5. Jer. iv. 19. Lam. iii. 24, 25. A similar ellipsis is assumed by some in 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, and 2 Sam. xiii. 39. By this peculiar form of speech the Psalmist calls upon himself to remember his own solemn acknowledgment of Jehovah as THE LORD or Supreme God.—The obscure clause which follows has been very variously explained. Some understand by *good* moral goodness, merit, and explain the whole to mean, ‘my goodness is not such as to entitle me to thy regard.’ Most interpreters however give to *good* its usual sense of good fortune, happiness (see Ps. cvi. 5. Job ix. 25), and make the whole clause mean, ‘my happiness is not obligatory or incumbent on thee, thou art not bound to provide for it’; or ‘my happiness is not above thee; I have no higher happiness than thee.’ The true sense is probably afforded by a modification of this last: ‘my happiness is not beside thee, independent of, or separable from thee,’ with allusion to the form of expression in the Hebrew of

the first commandment (Ex xx. 3.) The verse then contains a twofold acknowledgment of God, as the universal sovereign, and as the only source of individual enjoyment. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 25. That this recognition was not a mere momentary act, but a habitual affection of the mind, seems to be indicated by the Psalmist's appeal to his own soul as having made the acknowledgment already, hitherto or heretofore.

3. *To (or with) the saints who (are) in the land, and the nobles in whom (is) all my delight.* The construction of the first clause, and its connexion with the preceding verse, are very obscure. Some make *to* synonymous with *as to*. 'As to the saints who are in the land, and the nobles, in them is all my delight.' Or, 'as to the saints who are in the land, they are the nobles in whom is all my delight.' Others understand *to the saints* and *to Jehovah* as correlative expressions. 'To Jehovah I have said thus; to the saints thus.' Or, as the English Bible has it, 'my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints &c.' The least violent construction seems to be that which takes the preposition in its usual sense, that of *belonging to*, as in the phrases, *to David, to the chief Musician*, and in 1 Kings xv. 27. The meaning then is that the Psalmist's recognition of Jehovah as The Lord, and as the only source of happiness, is not peculiar to himself, but common to the whole body of the *saints* or *holy ones*. This epithet denotes personal character, not as its primary meaning, but as the effect of a peculiar relation to God, as the objects of his choice, set apart from the rest of men for this very purpose. See Ex. xix. 6. Deut. vii. 6. Ps. xxxiv. 10 (9.) Dan. vii. 21. viii. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 9. The pre-eminence of these over others, as the fruit of the divine election, is expressed by the word *nobles*, which like *saints* denotes moral character only in an indirect and secondary manner. The construction in this part of the verse is strongly idiomatic; the literal translation is, *the nobles of all my delight in*

*them.* Under the old dispensation, the nobles or elect of God had their local habitation in the land of promise. Hence they are here described as the ‘saints or consecrated ones who are in the land,’ not *in the earth*, which would be too indefinite and not so well suited to the context. As thus explained, the whole verse may be paraphrased as follows. ‘This profession of my trust in God I make, not merely as an individual believer, but as one belonging to the great body of the saints or consecrated ones, the nobles of the human race, not such by any original or natural pre-eminence, but by the sovereign and distinguishing favour of Jehovah, whom they trust as I do, and are therefore the rightful objects of my warmest love.’

4. *Many (or multiplied) shall be their sorrows—another they have purchased—I will not pour their drink-offering of blood, and will not take their names upon my lips.* With the happiness of those who like himself trust the Lord, he contrasts the wretchedness of those who have chosen any other object of supreme affection. The relative construction in the English version, ‘their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten &c.,’ gives the sense correctly, but with more variation from the Hebrew idiom, which conveys the same idea by means of short independent propositions.—In the word translated *their sorrows* (עֲצָבוֹתָם) there seems to be an allusion to a very similar form which would mean *their idols* (עֲצֵבֵיהֶם), as if to suggest that false gods are mere troubles and vexations.—*Another* means *another god*, in opposition to the one true God, Jehovah, as in Isai. xlii. 8. xlvi. 11. The contrast which is there expressed is here to be supplied from vs. 2 and 5, and from the general antithesis, running through the context, between God and gods, not idols merely, but any created object of supreme affection. The verb מָהַר in its derived forms means to *hasten*, and is so translated here by the English and some other versions. But in the only other place where the primitive verb occurs (Ex. xxii.



15) it means to *endow* a wife, or secure her by the payment of a dowry, according to the ancient oriental custom. The same usage of the verb exists in several of the cognate dialects. It seems here to have the general sense of purchasing, by costly sacrifice or self-denial, but with particular allusion to the conjugal relation which is constantly described in scripture as existing between worshippers and their gods. See Hos. iii. 2. and viii. 9. Ezek. xvi. 33, 34. In the last clause he abjures all communion with such idolaters. He will not join in their impious services, nor even name the names of their divinities. *Drink-offerings of blood*, libations no less loathsome than if composed of human blood, perhaps with an allusion to the frequent poetical description of wine as the blood of the grape. See Gen. xlix. 11. Deut. xxxii. 14. Isai. lxiii. 3. To take the name upon the lips is to stain or pollute them by pronouncing it. Both here and in Hos. ii. 19, there is an obvious allusion to the solemn prohibition of the law (Ex. xxiii. 13): "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." The pronoun *their*, in this whole clause, refers not to the worshippers but to their divinities, as comprehended under the collective term *another*.

5. *Jehovah (is) my allotted portion and my cup; thou wilt enlarge my lot.* The other side of the contrast is again exhibited. The idea is that in the Lord the Psalmist has all that he can wish or hope for. The figures are borrowed from the regular supply of food and drink. Compare Ps. xi. 6. xxiii. 5. There may also be allusions to the language of the Pentateuch in reference to the tribe of Levi. Deut. x. 9. xviii. 1, 2.—The common version of the last clause, *thou upholdest my lot*, is neither so grammatical nor yields so good a sense as that above given, where *enlarge* implies both honour and abundance, and the future form expresses confident assurance that the favour now experienced will be continued.

6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant things (or pleasant places); yea, my heritage is goodly.* The *lines* here spoken of are those used in measuring and dividing land. *Fallen*, i. e. assigned, with or without allusion to the lot, as the means of distribution. Compare Num. xxxiv. 2. Judges xviii. 1. The idea of *places* is suggested by the context, or the plural adjective may have the abstract sense of pleasure, pleasures, like the cognate form in Job xxxvi. 11.—The particle (וְ) which introduces the last clause is more emphatic than the simple copulative *and*. It properly means *also*, and implies that this clause contains something more than that before it. The original construction of the last clause is: *a heritage is goodly to me or upon me*, with allusion to the natural and common image of gifts or favours as descending from above. The heritage or portion thus described is God himself, but considered as including all desirable possessions.

7. *I will bless Jehovah who hath counselled me; also by night have my reins prompted me.* He praises God for having counselled or persuaded him to choose this goodly heritage in preference to every other portion.—The second clause begins with *yea* or *also*, as in the preceding verse. It here implies that under the divine control just mentioned, his own habitual dispositions tended to the same point.—*By night*, literally, *nights*, an idiom not unknown in vulgar English. The plural may in this case be emphatic, meaning whole nights, all night long. The night is mentioned, both as a time naturally favourable to reflection, and as showing that the same subject occupied his thoughts by night as well as by day. See above on Ps. i. 2. The *reins* are figuratively put like the *heart*, *bowels* &c. for the affections. See above, on Ps. vii. 10 (9).—*My reins have taught me*, warned me, prompted me, to utter the praise mentioned in the first clause, or to make the choice described in vs 1. 2 5.

8. *I have set Jehovah before me always ; because (he is) at my right hand, I shall not be moved.* I have set him before me, i. e. I recognise his presence and confide in his protection. The actual expression of this confidence is given in the other clause. The right hand is here mentioned not as a post of honour, but as that of a guard or defender. See below, on Ps. cix. 31. cx. 5. cxxi. 5.—*I shall not be moved* from my secure position. See above, on Ps. x. 6. xv. 5. The whole verse is a varied repetition and amplification of the last clause of v. 1, *I have trusted (or sheltered myself) in thee.*—The Septuagint version of this sentence is quoted in Acts ii. 25, with an express recognition of David as the author of the Psalm.

9. *Therefore has rejoiced my heart and exulted my glory ; yea, my flesh shall dwell in security (or confidence.)*—Therefore, because God is my ever present helper. *Glory* seems here to mean his nobler part, his soul, but not as wholly separate from the body, as appears from what follows. See above, on Ps. vii. 6 (5).—*Flesh* may either mean the body, as distinguished from the soul, or the whole person as including both. Compare Ps. lxiii. 2 (1.) lxxxiv. 3 (2).—The idea of dwelling in security or confidence of safety is borrowed from the Pentateuch. See Deut. xxxiii. 12. 28, and compare Judges xviii. 7. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxiii. 16. A similar allusion has been found already in Ps. iv. 9. (8.) The Septuagint version of the sentence, although it substitutes *tongue* for *glory*, is substantially correct, and therefore retained in Acts ii. 26.—The second clause is not simply parallel and equivalent to the first, but is rather an actual performance of the duty there described. Having there said that his heart did triumph in the certainty of God's protection, he here proves the truth of his assertion, by professing his assured hope that his whole person, not excepting his material part, shall dwell in safety under that protection. This is applicable both to preservation from death and preservation in

death, and may therefore without violence be understood, in a lower sense, of David, who did die and see corruption but whose body is to rise again, as well as in a higher sense of Christ, whose body, though it died, was raised again before it saw corruption.

10. *For thou wilt not leave my soul to Hell; thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption.* He now assigns the ground or reason of the confidence expressed in the preceding verse. 'I am sure my soul and body will be safe, because thou canst not, without ceasing to be God and my God, give me up to the destroyer.' He does not say *leave in*, but *to*, i. e. abandon to, give up to the dominion or possession of another. The same Hebrew phrase occurs, with the same sense, in Lev. xix. 10. Job xxxix. 14, and in Ps. xlix. 11 (10) below.—*Hell* is here to be taken in its wide old English sense, as corresponding to the Hebrew *Sheol* and the Greek *Hades*, the invisible world or state of the dead. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5) and ix. 18 (17).—*Give* i. e. permit, or more emphatically, give up, abandon, which makes the parallelism of the clauses more exact. *Thy Holy One*, or more exactly, thy favourite, the object of thy special favour. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) The textual reading is a plural form (חסידים), the singular (חסיד) being a marginal correction or *keri*. The Jews contend for the former and most Christians for the latter, which is favoured by the oldest versions and retained in the New Testament. The essential difference between the two is less than it may seem at first sight, since even the singular is really collective and includes the whole class of God's chosen and favoured ones, of whom Christ is the head and representative.—*To see*, i. e. to experience or undergo *corruption*. Compare the phrase to *see death*, Luke ii. 26.—It has been disputed whether שָׁחַת is derived from שָׁחַת and means a pit, or from שָׁחַת and means corruption. Both allegations are probably true, the antecedent improbability of

such a double sense and derivation being counterbalanced by the clear analogy of נִחַת, which is of a different sense and gender as derived from נִחַת and נָחַת. The use of this equivocal expression may have been intentional, in order to make it applicable both to David and to Christ. (See above, on the preceding verse.) To both, the words contain a promise of deliverance from death, but in the case of Christ with a specific reference to his actual escape from the corruption which is otherwise inseparable from dissolution. Believers in general are saved from the perpetual dominion of death, but Christ was saved even from the first approach of putrefaction. In this peculiar and most pregnant sense the words are applied to Christ exclusively by two apostles, and in that sense declared to be inapplicable to David. (Acts ii. 29—31. xiii. 35—37.) Their reasoning would utterly forbid the application to any lower subject, were it not for the ambiguity or twofold meaning of the Hebrew word, which cannot therefore be explained away without embarrassing the interpretation of this signal prophecy.

11. *Thou wilt teach me the way of life, fulness of joy with thy face (or presence,) pleasures in thy right hand forever.* He trusts God not only for deliverance from death, but for guidance in the way to life, or blessed immortality. (Compare Prov. ii. 19.) The Hebrew verb is causative and means *thou wilt make me know*, point out, or show to me. *Fulness*, satiety, or rather satisfaction, in its strongest sense, including the ideas of contentment and abundance. The plural, *joys*, denotes not only richness but variety. The next phrase may simply mean before thy face or in thy presence. But it will also bear a stronger sense and represent God's presence or the sight of him, not merely as the place, but the source of enjoyment. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6,) and compare Ps. xvii. 15. lxxx. 4 (3.) So in the last clause, the idea is not merely *at thy right hand* as a place of honour and of safety, but *in thy right hand* as

the depository of eternal joys, or *with thy right hand*, as the instrument by which they are dispensed. See below, on Ps. xvii. 7.—This last clause is omitted in Peter's citation of the passage, Acts ii. 27, no doubt because it is a mere poetical reiteration of the one before it, which is itself only added to complete the period, and not because it was essential to the apostle's purpose. That purpose was accomplished by applying the two preceding verses to our Saviour, not exclusively indeed, but by way of eminence and in a peculiar sense, which we learn however from Acts ii. 30, 31, was actually present to the mind of the inspired Psalmist. The same argumentative interpretation of the prophecy is given by Paul in Acts xiii. 35—37.

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## PSALM XVII.

A SUFFERER, in imminent danger, professes his sincere conformity to God's will, and invokes his favour and protection, vs. 1—5. This petition is enforced by an appeal to former mercies, vs. 6, 7, and a description of the wickedness of his enemies, vs. 8—12, whose character and spirit he contrasts with his own vs. 13—15.

The position of this Psalm in the collection seems to have been determined by the resemblance of its subject, tone, and diction, to those of the sixteenth, with which it may be said to form a pair or double psalm, like the first and second, third and fourth, ninth and tenth, &c.

1. *A Prayer By David. Hear oh Jehovah, the right, hearken to my cry, give ear to my prayer not with lips of*



*deceit.* This psalm is called a prayer because petition is its burden, its characteristic feature, its essential element. *By David*, literally, *to David*, i. e. belonging to him as its author. — *The right*, righteousness or justice in the abstract, here put for a just cause, or perhaps for one who is in the right, who has justice on his side. The prayer that God will hear the right implies that no appeal is made to partiality or privilege, but merely to the merits of the case. The righteousness claimed is not merely that of the cause but that of the person, not inherent but derived from the imputed righteousness of faith according to the doctrine of the Old as well as the New Testament. The quality alleged is not that of sinless perfection but that of sincere conformity to the divine will.—The last clause, *not with lips of deceit*, applies to all that goes before, and represents sincerity as necessary to acceptance. The original expression is still stronger and conveys much more than a negative. It does not merely say, *not with deceitful lips*, but more positively *with lips not deceitful*.

2. *From before thee my judgment shall come forth ; thine eyes shall behold equities.* This sentence really involves a prayer, but in form it is the expression of a confident hope. *From before thee*, from thy presence, thy tribunal. *My judgment*, my acquittal, vindication ; or *my justice*, i. e. my just cause, my cause considered as a just one. *Shall come forth*, to the view of others, shall be seen and recognised in its true character, as being what it is. The reason is, because God's judgments are infallible. His eyes cannot fail to see innocence or righteousness where it exists. The plural, *rectitudes* or *equities*, is an emphatic abstract. See above, on the parallel passage Ps. xi. 7.

3. *Thou hast tried my heart, hast visited (me) by night, hast assayed me ; thou wilt not find ; my mouth shall not ex-*

*ceed my thought.* He still appeals to God as the judge and witness of his own sincerity. The preterites represent the process as no new one, although still continued in the present. *Visited* for the purpose of examination or inspection, in which specific sense the English verb is often used. *By night*, as the time when men's thoughts are least under restraint, and when the evil, if there be any, is most certain of detection. Purged me, as the purity of metals is tested by fire, to which process the Hebrew word is specially applied. *Thou shalt not find* any thing at variance with the sincerity of this profession.—The future form implies that the investigation is to be continued, but without any change in the result.—The last clause is doubtful and obscure. The common version, *I am purposed (that) my mouth shall not transgress*, agrees well enough with the form of the words, but is forbidden by the accents. The reversed construction, *my thoughts shall not exceed my mouth or (speech)*, is ungrammatical; nor does either of these constructions suit the context so well as the first, which makes the clause a renewed profession of sincerity.

4. (*As*) *to the works of man, by the word of thy lips I have kept the paths of the violent (transgressor).* The works of man are the sinful courses to which man is naturally prone. The generic term *man* (אָדָם) is often used in reference to the sinful infirmities of human nature. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 10 (9.) Hos. vi. 7. Job xxxi. 33. The word of God's lips is the word uttered by him, with particular reference to his precepts or commands, but including his entire revelation. *By this word*, by means of it as an instrument, and in reliance on it as an authority.—The verb (שָׁמַר) translated *kept* properly means *watched*, and is elsewhere applied to the observance of a rule, but in this place seems to mean *watched* for the purpose of avoiding, as we say in English to *keep away from* or *keep out of* danger.—From the verb (פָּרַץ) to break forth, elsewhere applied to gross iniqui-

ties (Hos. iv. 2), comes the adjective (פָּרִיץ) violent, outrageous here used as an epithet of the flagrant sinner.

5. *My steps have laid hold of thy paths, my feet have not swerved.* His profession of integrity is still continued. The first verb is in the infinitive form, but determined by the preterites before and after. The English language does not furnish equivalents to the parallel terms in Hebrew, both which denote footsteps. The common version violates the context by converting the first clause into a prayer, which would here be out of place.

6. *I have invoked thee because thou wilt answer me, oh God! Incline thine ear to me, hear my speech.* The alternation of the tenses is significant. 'I have invoked thee heretofore, and do so still, because I know that thou wilt hear me.' It is needless to observe how much the sentence is enfeebled by the change of either to the present.—*Thou wilt hear me*, in the pregnant sense of hearing graciously or answering a prayer. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4).—*Oh (mighty) God!* The divine name here used is the one denoting God's omnipotence. See above, Ps. v. 5 (4). vii. 12 (11.) x. 11, 12. xvi. 1.—*My speech*, what I say, אָמַר from אָמַר to say.

7. *Distinguish thy mercies, (oh thou) saving those trusting, from those rising up, with thy right hand.* The first verb is the same that occurs in Ps. iv. 4 (3.) Here, as there, it means to set apart, or single out, but with particular reference to extraordinary favours, implying an unusual necessity. Such mercy is described as perfectly in keeping with the divine mode of action in such cases.—*Trusting*, seeking refuge, i. e. in God. See above, on Ps. xvi. 1. The same ellipsis may be assumed after *rising up*, or we may supply *against them*.—With thy right hand, as the instrument of deliverance. Compare Ps. xvi

11. These words must be connected in construction with *saving*.

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye, in the shadow of thy wings thou wilt hide me.* The first verb means to watch over, guard, preserve with care. See above, on v. 4, where it occurs in a figurative application. The pupil or apple of the eye is a proverbial type of that which is most precious and most easily injured, and which therefore has a double claim to sedulous protection. The original phrase is strongly idiomatic, exhibiting what seems to be a singular confusion of the genders. Its literal meaning is, supplying the articles omitted by poetic license, *the man* (or *the little man*, or *the manlike part*), *the daughter of the eye*. The first word has reference to the image reflected in the pupil, which is then described as belonging to the eye, by an oriental idiom which uses personal relations, son, daughter, &c. to denote the mutual relations even of inanimate objects. The comparison is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 10, where it is followed by another with the eagle's treatment of her young, to which there seems to be allusion in the last clause of the verse before us. The imperative form of the first verb is no reason for departing from the future form of the other, which is much more expressive. What he asks in one clause he expresses his assured hope of obtaining in the other.

9. *From the face of the wicked who have wasted me ; mine enemies to the soul will surround me.* The preceding sentence is continued, with a more particular description of the objects of his dread. 'Thou wilt hide me from the face, sight, or presence of the wicked.' *Wasted*, desolated, destroyed, with allusion perhaps to the siege of a town or the invasion of a country. The same term is applied to a dead man in Judg. v. 27. The *enemies* of the last clause are identical with the *wicked* of the first. *Enemies in soul* may mean cordial haters, or enemies who

seek the soul or life, called *deadly enemies* in the English version. Or שׂוּרָה may be construed with the verb: surround me eagerly (with craving appetite); or surround me against my soul or life, i. e. with a view to take it.—The future form suggests that the danger which the first clause had described as past, was still present and likely to continue. As if he had said, ‘from my wicked foes who have already wasted me, and will no doubt still continue to surround me.’ In this description present danger is included, whereas if we substitute the present form, we lose the obvious allusion to the future and the past.

10. *Their fat they have closed; (with) their mouth they have spoken in pride.* The first clause, though not exactly rendered, is correctly paraphrased in the English Bible: *they are enclosed in their own fat.* This is no uncommon metaphor in Scripture for moral and spiritual insensibility. See Deut. xxxii.

15. Job xv. 27. Ps. lxxiii. 7. cxix. 70. The literal sense of the expressions derives some illustration from Judg. iii. 22. Some give to *fat* the specific sense of *heart*, which it is said to have in Arabic: ‘their heart they have closed.’ But the other explanation yields the same sense in a more emphatic form, and with closer conformity to Hebrew usage.

11. *In our footsteps now have they surrounded us; their eyes they will set, to go astray in the land.* The meaning of the first words, *in our footsteps*, seems to be, wherever we go. Compare Ps. cxxxix. 3, 5. For the masoretic reading *us*, the text has *me*, which, although harsher, amounts to the same thing, as the sufferer is an ideal person representing many real ones. The parallel clauses exhibit the usual combination of the preterite and future forms, implying that what had been done was likely to be still continued.—*They fix their eyes*, upon this as the end at which they aim. *To go astray* or turn aside, i. e. from the way of God’s commandments, to which the Psalmist, in v. 5,

had declared his own adherence. The translations *bowing down* and *casting down* are less in accordance with the context and with the usage of the Hebrew verb, which is constantly employed to express departure from God and aberration from the path of duty. See 1 Kings xi. 9. Job xxxi. 7. Ps. xliv. 19 (18.) cxix. 51, 157. *To the earth* or *in the earth*, although grammatical, affords a less appropriate sense than *in the land*, i. e. the holy land or land of promise, the local habitation of God's people under the old economy. See above, on Ps. xvi. 3, and compare Isaiah xxvi. 10.

12. *His likeness (is) as a lion ; he is craving to tear ; and as a young lion sitting in secret places.* The singular suffix refers to the enemy as an ideal person. The future (יִרְכָּסוּ) means that he is just about to feel or gratify the appetite for blood. *To tear* in pieces, as a wild beast does his prey before devouring it.—*Sitting*, lurking, lying in wait, with special reference to the patient promptness of the wild beast in such cases.—The comparison is the same as in Ps. x. 8—10.

13. *Arise, Jehovah, go before his face, make him bow, save my soul from the wicked (with) thy sword.* On the meaning of the prayer that God would *arise*, see above on Ps. iii. 8 (7.) —*Go before his face*: the same Hebrew phrase occurs below (Ps. xcv. 2) in the sense of coming into one's presence. Here the context gives it the more emphatic sense of meeting, encountering, withstanding. *Make him bend* or *bow*, as the conquered bows beneath the conqueror.—The construction of *thy sword* seems to be the same with that of *their mouth* in v. 10. The Septuagint puts *thy sword* in apposition with *my soul*, the Vulgate with the word immediately preceding, *men (who are) thy sword*, as the Assyrian is said to be the rod in God's hand (Isai. x. 5.) But such a representation of the enemy as God's chosen instruments, instead of enforcing would enfeeble the



petition.—The verb translated *save* is a causative strictly meaning *make to escape*.

14. *From men (with) thy hand, from the world ; their portion is in (this) life, and with thy hoard thou wilt fill their belly ; they shall have enough of sons, and leave their residue to their babes.* All the parts of this obscure verse have been variously explained. As in the preceding verse, some here read *men (which are) thy hand*, i. e. the instrument of thy wrath. The difficult expression מְהִלָּךְ is by some understood as a description of their character and spirit—*men of the world*—men who belong to it, and whose hearts are set upon it. Others give מְהִלָּךְ its primary meaning of *duration* and make the phrase descriptive of prosperity—*men of duration* or *perpetuity*—who not only prosper now, but have long done so, and seem likely to continue. The simplest construction is that given in the prayer-book version, which takes the preposition in the same sense before both nouns—“*from the men, I say, and from the evil world.*” “*World* is then simply a collective equivalent to the plural *men*. This translation of the former word is justified by the analogy of Ps. xlix. 2 (1.)—*Life* is by some understood to mean a life of ease or pleasure ; but this is far less natural than the obvious sense of *this life*, this present state as distinguished from futurity. The rest of the verse shows that their desires have not been disappointed. To the eye of sense God sometimes seems to have reserved his choicest gifts for the ungodly. *Thy hidden (treasure)*, i. e. hoarded, carefully secreted. *Fill their belly*, satisfy their appetite. The future form implies that the state of things described is likely to continue.—The next clause may be also rendered : *(their) sons shall be satisfied, and leave their residue to their babes.* This would be a strong description of prosperity continued from generation to generation. According to the version before given, the men of the world are represented as having their largest wishes gratified not only in

the number but the prosperous condition of their children. See Ps. cxxvii. 3. cxxviii. 3, 4. Job xxi. 111. The whole is only a description of things as they seem to man, before God's judgments interpose to change them.

15. *I in righteousness shall see thy face; I shall be satisfied in awaking with thy appearance.* The pronoun expressed at the beginning of the sentence is emphatic. I, in opposition to the men described in the preceding verse. 'They may rejoice in richer providential gifts, and be satisfied with what they thus possess. But I enjoy what they do not, the sense of acceptance in thy sight, righteousness, justification, recognition as a righteous person.' The ambiguity of construction in the last clause is the same both in Hebrew and in English. The preposition *with* may connect what follows either with *awaking* or with *satisfied*. Thus the prayer-book version reads, 'and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it;' but the authorised version: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." The latter construction is the one required by the accents and preferred by most interpreters, the rather as the last word does not mean *resemblance* in the abstract, but form, shape, or visible appearance. Ex. xx. 4. Num. xii. 8. Deut. iv. 16, 23, 25. Job. iv. 16. The idea here suggested is *the sight of thee*, exactly corresponding to *behold thy face*, in the parallel clause.—*In awaking*, or *when I shall awake*, is understood by some to mean, when I awake to-morrow, and from this expression they infer that the psalm was originally composed, and intended to be used, as an evening-song or prayer. See above, on Ps. iii. 6 (5.) iv. 9 (8.) v. 4 (3.) Others give the phrase the same sense but a wider application; *in awaking*, i. e. whenever I awake. As if he had said, while the men of the world think day and night of their possessions and their pleasures, I rejoice, whenever I awake, in the sight of God's reconciled countenance and the consciousness of friendship with

him.' A third interpretation puts a still higher sense upon the phrase as referring to the act of awaking from the sleep of death. But this excludes too much from view the enjoyment of God's favour and protection even here, which is the burden of the whole prayer. If the hope of future blessedness had been enough, the previous petitions would have been superfluous. The utmost that can be conceded to this view of the passage is that, by a natural association, what is here said of awaking out of sleep in this life may be extended to that great awaking which awaits us all hereafter. The same state of mind and heart which enables a man now to be contented with the partial views which he enjoys of God will prepare him to be satisfied hereafter with the beatific vision through eternity.

## PSALM XVIII.

THIS Psalm consists of five unequal parts. In the first, David announces his desire to praise God for his wonderful deliverances, v. 2—4 (1—3.) In the second, these are described, not in historical form, but by the use of the strongest poetical figures, vs. 5—20 (4—19.) In the third, he declares them to have been acts of righteousness as well as mercy, and in strict accordance with the general laws of the divine administration, vs. 21—28 (20—27.) In the fourth, he goes again into particulars, but less in the way of recollection than of anticipation, founded both on what he has experienced and on what God has promised, vs. 29—46 (28—45.) In the fifth, this change of form is accounted for by summing up the promises referred to, and applying them not merely to David as an individual, but to

his posterity forever, thus including Christ and showing the whole composition to be one of those Messianic psalms, in which he is the principal subject of the prophecy, though not the only one nor even the one nearest to the eye of the observer, vs. 46—51 (45—50.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. By a Servant of Jehovah. By David, who spake unto Jehovah the words of this song, in the day Jehovah freed him from the hand of all his foes and from the hand of Saul.* The first clause of the title shows, in this as in other cases, that the composition was designed from the beginning to be used in the public worship of the ancient church, and has reference therefore to the experience of the writer, not as a private person, but as an eminent *servant of the Lord*, i. e. one entrusted with the execution of his purposes, as an instrument or agent. The expressions, *spake unto Jehovah &c.* are borrowed from Ex. xv. 1 and Deut. xxxi. 30. This is the more observable because the psalm contains obvious allusions to the song of Moses in Deut. ch. xxxii. An analogous case is found in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, where the form of expression is evidently borrowed from Num. xxiv. 3.—The repetition of *hand* is not found in the original, where the first word (כַּף) properly denotes the *palm* or inside of the hand, but is poetically used as an equivalent to יָד. The hand is a common figure for power and possession. This whole clause bears a strong analogy to Ex. xviii. 10, where “out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh” corresponds exactly to “out of the hand of all his foes and out of the hand of Saul,” i. e. and especially of Saul. Compare “Judah and Jerusalem” Isaiah i. 1, “the land and Jericho” Josh. ii. 1. This form of expression does not imply that Saul was the last of his enemies, but rather that he was the first, both in time and in importance, so that he might be considered equal to all the others put together. And accordingly we find their idea carried out in the structure of this psalm, one

half of which seems to relate especially to Saul and the remainder to his other enemies. The general expressions of this title show that the psalm was not occasioned by any particular event, but by a retrospect of all the deliverances from persecution which the writer had experienced.

2. *And said, I will love thee, Jehovah, my strength!* The sentence is continued from the foregoing verse, *who sang unto the Lord . . . and said.* The future form, *I will love*, represents it as a permanent affection, and expresses a fixed purpose. I not only love thee now, but am resolved to do so forever. The verb itself occurs nowhere else in its primitive form, but often in one of its derived forms, to express the compassionate regard of a superior to an inferior. The simple form is here used to denote the reciprocal affection of the inferior party. From its etymology the verb seems to express the strongest and most intimate attachment, being properly expressive of *στοργή* or parental love. The noun translated *strength* is also peculiar to this passage, though its root and cognate forms are very common. Combined with one of the divine names it constitutes the name *Hezekiah*, which may have been suggested by the verse before us. *My strength*, i. e. the giver of my strength or the supplier of its deficiencies, the substitute for my strength, my protector and deliverer.

3 (2.) *Jehovah (is) my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God (is) my rock, I will trust in him; my shield and my horn of salvation, my height (or high place.)* By this accumulation of descriptive epithets the Psalmist represents God as the object of his trust and his protector. The first two figures, *my rock* and *my fortress*, contain an allusion to the physical structure of the Holy Land, as well as to David's personal experience. The caves and fissures of the rocks, with which the land abounded, had often afforded him shelter and

concealment when pursued by Saul. See Judges vi. 2. 1 Sam xxiv. 3. 2 Sam. v. 7. The literal expression, *my deliverer*, seems to be added as an explanation of the figures which precede. *My God* may also be explained as one of the descriptive terms; but it seems more natural to make it the subject of a new proposition, equivalent and parallel to that in the first clause. Here again we are obliged to use the same English word as a translation of two different words in Hebrew. As the *rock* (סֶלֶעַ) of the first clause suggests the idea of concealment and security, so the *rock* (צֶרֶר) of the second clause suggests that of strength and immobility. The figure is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 4, and re-appears in Ps. xcii. 16 (15.) Compare Isaiah's phrase, *a rock of ages* (Isaiah xxvi. 4), and Jacob's phrase, *the stone of Israel* (Gen. xlix. 24), where *stone*, like *rock* in the clause before us, denotes not the place but the material, not *a stone* but *stone*, as one of the hardest and least mutable substances with which we are acquainted, and therefore an appropriate figure for combined immutability and strength. For the figurative use of *shield* in such connexions, see above on Ps. iii. 4 (3). The next phrase has allusion to the defensive habits of horned animals. The figure seems to be borrowed from Deut. xxxiii. 17. (Compare 1 Sam. ii. 10. Job xvi. 15.) *My horn of salvation* may be understood to mean, *my horn, to wit, my salvation*, so that the second noun is explanatory of the first. More probably however the expression means *the horn that saves me*, by repelling or destroying all my enemies. In Luke i. 69, the same phrase is applied to Christ by Zacharias. The last term in the description belongs to the same class with the first, and was probably suggested by the Psalmist's early wanderings among the rocks and caverns of Judea. The Hebrew word properly denotes a place so high as to be beyond the reach of danger. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9), where the same word is twice used in the same sense and figurative application.



4. (3) *To be praised I will call Jehovah, and from my enemies I shall be saved.* 'I will invoke God as a being worthy of all praise.' The first Hebrew word, which has the force of a future passive participle, is a standing epithet of Jehovah in the lyrical style of the Old Testament. See Ps. xlviii. 2 (1), xcvi. 4. cxiii. 3. cxlv. 3. 1 Chron. xvi. 25. The connexion of the clauses is, that the believing invocation of Jehovah in his true character and with a just appreciation of his excellence must needs be followed by the experience of his favor. They who cry and are not heard, as we read in v. 42 (41) below, cry indeed to Jehovah, but they do not invoke him as the one to be praised, they do not see him as he is, and cannot pray to him as they ought. They ask and receive not because they ask amiss, (James iv. 3.)

5. (4) *The bands of death have enclosed me, and the streams of worthlessness (or Belial) will (still) affright me.* From the general acknowledgment contained in vs. 1—4, he proceeds to a more particular description of his danger. By *bands* we are probably to understand the cordage of a net, such as fowlers spread for birds. This is a favorite metaphor with David to denote dangers, and particularly those of an insidious and complicated kind. See below, Ps. cxvi. 3. The word *Belial* properly means *worthless, good for nothing*. The reference is here to wicked men, whose number and violence are indicated by the figure of torrents, overflowing streams. The use of the future in the last clause shows that the writer, as in many other cases, takes his position in the midst of the event, and views it as partly past and partly future. This bold assumption of an ideal situation greatly adds to the life and vividness of the description.

6 (5.) *The bands of hell surrounded me, the snares of death encountered me.* This verse merely repeats and amplifies the first clause of the fifth. *Hell*, in the wide old English sense is

a poetical equivalent to *death*. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) The explicit mention of *snares* in the last clause confirms the explanation before given of *bands*. *Encountered*, met me, crossed my path. The sense *prevented* or *anticipated* does not suit the context, and that of *surprised* is not sufficiently justified by usage. See above, on Ps. xvii. 13.

7 (6.) *In my distress I will invoke Jehovah and to my God will cry ; he will hear from his palace my voice, and my prayer before him will come, into his ears.* The verbs are in the future because they express the feelings not of one looking back upon the danger as already past but of one actually implicated in it. See above, on v. 5. (4.) The literal meaning of the words is, *in distress to me*. Compare the phrase, *at times in distress*, Ps. ix. 10 (9), x. 1. *My God* implies a covenant relation and a hope of audience founded on it. The verb translated *cry* is specially appropriated to a cry for help. *His palace* here means heaven, as God's royal residence. See above, on Ps. xi. 4. *Into his ears* is a kind of afterthought, designed to strengthen the preceding expression. It shall not only reach his presence, but as it were shall penetrate his ears. The whole expresses an assured hope of being heard, and is really tantamount to an assertion that he was heard.

8 (7.) *Then did the earth shake and quake and the foundations of the mountains trembled and were shaken because he was angry.* The idea of succession expressed by the English *then* is conveyed in Hebrew by the form of the verb. The resemblance, in form and sound, of *shake* and *quake*, corresponds to that of the original verbs (וַתִּרְעַשׁ וַתִּקְרַעַשׁ). A reflexive or emphatic passive form of the first verb appears in the second clause. The closing words of this clause strictly mean *because it was inflamed (or enkindled) to him*, with an ellipsis of the noun (הַאֵשׁ) *anger*. The full construction may be found in Deut

vi. 15 and Ps. cxxiv. 3. The phrase *foundations of the mountains* is copied from Deut. xxxii. 22.

9. *There went up smoke in his wrath and fire from his mouth devours ; coals are kindled from it.* Smoke and fire are mentioned as natural concomitants and parallel figures, both denoting anger and suggested by the phrase *it was inflamed to him* in the preceeding verse. Compare Deut. xxxii. 22. xxix. 19 (20). Ps. xxiv. 1. The translation *nostrils* rests on a confusion of two collateral derivatives from the verb to breathe. (See my note on Isai. xlviii. 9.) Nor is this sense required by the parallelism, unless *mouth* and *nose* must always go together. There seems to be some allusion to the fire and smoke at Sinai, Ex. xix. 18. *From it* may have reference to *fire* ; but the nearest antecedent is *his mouth*. Compare Job xli. 11—13 (19—21.) There is no need of supplying any object with *devours* ; the idea is that of a *devouring fire*, i. e. one capable of consuming whatever combustible material it may meet with.

10 (9.) *So he bowed the heavens and came down, and gloom (was) under his feet.* The scene seems here to be transferred from heaven to earth, where the Psalmist sees not only the divine operation but the personal presence of Jehovah. The word *so*, familiarly employed in English to continue a narrative, here represents the vau conversive of the Hebrew. The word translated *gloom* is not the usual term for 'darkness, but a poetical expression specially applied to dense clouds and vapours. The expression seems to be derived from Deut. v. 22. Compare with this clause Ex. xix. 16. and with the first Is. lxiii. 19 (lxiv. 1.)

11 (10.) *And he rode on a cherub and flew, and soared on the wings of a wind.* The cherubim of the Mosaic system were visible representations of the whole class of creatures su

perior to man. The singular form *cherub* seems to be used here to convey the indefinite idea of a superhuman but created being. The whole verse is a poetical description of God's intervention, as a scene presented to the senses. As earthly kings are carried by inferior animals, so the heavenly king is here described as borne through the air in his descent by beings intermediate between himself and man. The word *soared* in the second clause is used to represent a poetical term in the original borrowed from Deut. xxviii. 49. With the whole verse compare Ps. lxviii. 18 (17) and civ. 3.

12 (11.) (*And*) *set darkness (as) his covert about him, his shelter, darkness of waters, clouds of the skies.* This concealment suggests the idea of a brightness insupportable by mortal sight. Compare Deut. iv. 11. Job xxxvi. 29. Ps. xcvi. 2. *Darkness of waters* does not mean dark waters but watery darkness, a beautiful description of clouds charged with rain. The two nouns in the last clause both mean clouds, but the second is used only in the plural, and seems properly to designate the whole body of vapours constituting the visible heavens or sky. A somewhat similar combination occurs in Ex. xix. 9.

13 (12.) *From the blaze before him his clouds passed—hail and coals of fire.* The dark clouds which enveloped him are now described as penetrated by the light within. *Passed*, i. e. passed away, were dispelled. The last clause may be construed as an exclamation such as an eye-witness might have uttered. The combination is borrowed from Ex. ix. 24. (Compare Ps. lxxviii. 47, 48.) Hail, as an instrument of the divine vengeance, is also mentioned in Jos. x. 11.

14 (13.) *Then thundered in the heavens Jehovah, and the Highest gave his voice—hail and coals of fire.* The second clause is a poetical repetition of the first. 'The Most High

*gave his voice* means in this connexion neither more nor less than that he 'thundered in the heavens.' Though visibly present upon earth he is described as still in heaven. Compare Gen. xi. 5, 7. xviii. 21. John iii. 13. The last clause may be construed as in v. 13, or made dependent on the verb *gave*, as in Ex. ix. 23: "Jehovah gave thunder and hail." This clause is repeated because the hail and lightning were not merely terrific circumstances, but appointed instruments of vengeance and weapons of destruction.

15 (14.) *Then sent he his arrows and scattered them, and shot forth lightnings and confounded them.* The lightnings of the last clause may be understood as explaining the arrows of the first. Instead of *shot forth lightnings* some translate *and lightnings much*, i. e. many, in which sense the Hebrew word (  $\text{רָב}$  ) occurs sometimes elsewhere. (Ex. xix. 21. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. Num. xxvi. 54.) In several other places it seems to mean *enough* or *too much*. (Gen. xlv. 28. Ex. ix. 28. Num. xvi. 3, 7. Deut. i. 6.) If either of these constructions is adopted, the verb *sent* must be repeated from the other clause. The version first given, *shot*, is justified by the analogy of Gen. xlix. 23. The last verb in the sentence is a military term denoting the confusion of an army produced by a surprise or sudden panic. See Ex. xiv. 24. xxiii. 27. Jos. x. 10, and with the whole verse compare Ps. cxliv. 6.

16 (15.) *Then were seen the channels of water and uncovered the foundations of the world, at thy rebuke, Jehovah, at the blast of the breath of thy wrath.* The idea meant to be conveyed by this poetical description is that of sudden and complete subversion, the turning of the whole earth upside down. The language is not designed to be exactly expressive of any real physical change whatever. *From* or *at thy rebuke*, i. e. after it and in consequence of it. *The breath of thy wrath*, thy angry

breath, might also be rendered, *the wind of thy wrath, thy angry or tempestuous wind*. That the Hebrew words do not mean *thy nose* or *nostrils*, see above, on v. 9 (8.) Some suppose an allusion, in the figures of this verse, to the *floods of worthlessness* in v. 5 (4), and the *bands of hell* in v. 6 (5.)

17 (16.) *He will send from above, he will take me, he will draw me out of many waters*. Here again the writer seems to take his stand between the inception and the consummation of the great deliverance and to speak just as he might have spoken while it was in progress. 'All this he has done in preparation, and now he is about to send &c.' This seems to be a more satisfactory explanation of the future forms than to make them simple presents, and still more than to make them preterites, which is wholly arbitrary and ungrammatical, although the acts described by these futures were in fact past at the time of composition. To *send from above* in our idiom means to send a messenger; but in Hebrew this verb is the one used with *hand* where we say *stretch out*, e. g. in the parallel passage Ps. cxliv. 7. (See also Gen. viii. 9. xlviii. 14.) The noun however is sometimes omitted, and the verb used absolutely to express the sense of the whole phrase, as in 2 Sam. vi. 6. Ps. lvii. 4 (3.) *From above*, from on high, from the height or high place, i. e. heaven, the place of God's manifested presence. There is peculiar beauty in the word translated *draw*, which is the root of the name *Moses*, and occurs, besides the place before us, only in the explanation of that name recorded by himself, Ex. ii. 10. The choice of this unusual expression here involves an obvious allusion both to the historical fact and the typical meaning of the deliverance of Moses, and a kind of claim upon the part of David to be regarded as another Moses.

18 (17.) *He will free me from my enemy* (because he is) *strong, and from my haters, because they are mightier than*



**I.** The futures are to be explained as in the verse preceding. The enemy here mentioned is an ideal person, representing a whole class, of whom Saul was the chief representative. The idiomatic phrase, *my enemy strong*, may be understood as simply meaning *my strong enemy*; but the true construction seems to be indicated by the parallelism. His own weakness and the power of his enemies is given as a reason for the divine interposition.

19 (18.) *They will encounter me in the day of my calamity, and Jehovah has been for a stay to me.* The first clause seems to express a belief that his trials from this quarter are not ended, while the other appeals to past deliverances as a ground of confidence that God will still sustain him. Most interpreters, however, make the future and preterite forms of this verse perfectly equivalent. 'They encountered me in the day of my calamity, and the Lord was for a stay to me.' As to the meaning of the first verb, see above, on v. 6 (5.) It is not improbable that David here alludes to his sufferings in early life when fleeing before Saul. See above on v. 3 (2.)

20 (19.) *And brought me out into the wide place; he will save me because he delights in me.* The construction is continued from the foregoing sentence. As confinement or pressure is a common figure for distress, so relief from it is often represented as enlargement, or as coming forth into an open space. See above, on Ps. iv. 2 (1.) Here, as in the preceding verse, most interpreters make no distinction between preterite and future. The meaning may however be that he expects the same deliverance hereafter which he has experienced already.

21 (20.) *Jehovah will treat me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands will he repay me.* The future verbs have reference to the condition of the

Psalmist under his afflictions, and the hopes which even then he was enabled to cherish. At the same time they make this the announcement of a general and perpetual truth, a law by which God's dispensations are to be controlled forever. The hands are mentioned as organs or instruments of action. Compare Isai. i. 15. Job ix. 30. xxii. 30. The righteousness here claimed is not an absolute perfection or entire exemption from all sinful infirmity, but what Paul calls submission to the righteousness of God (Rom. x. 3), including faith in his mercy and a sincere governing desire to do his will. This is a higher and more comprehensive sense than innocence of some particular charge, or innocence in reference to man though not in reference to God.

22 (21.) *For I have kept the ways of Jehovah, and have not apostatised from my God.* The Lord's ways are the ways which he marks out for us to walk in, the ways of duty and of safety. To *keep* them is to keep one's self in them, to observe them so as to adhere to them and follow them. The last clause strictly means, *I have not been wicked (or guilty) from my God*; a combination of the verb and preposition which shows clearly that the essential idea in the writer's mind was that of apostacy or total abjuration of God's service. It is of this mortal sin, and not of all particular transgressions, that the Psalmist here professes himself innocent.

23 (22.) *For all his judgments (are) before me, and his statutes I will not put from me.* Judicial decisions and permanent enactments are here used as equivalent expressions for all God's requisitions. To have these before one is to observe them, and the opposite of putting them away or out of sight. The terms of this profession have been evidently chosen in allusion to such dicta of the law itself as Deut. v. 29. xvii. 11. From the past tense of the foregoing verse he here insensibly slides into the present and the future, so as to make his profession of sincerity

include his former life, his actual dispositions, and his settled purpose for all time to come.

21 (22) *And I have been perfect with him, and have kept myself from my iniquity.* He not only will be faithful, but he has been so already, in the sense before explained. There is evident reference in the first clause to the requirement of the Law, "and shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God," Deut. xiv. 1. (*Compare Gen. xviii. 1.*) *With* means not merely in his presence, or in sight, as distinguished from men's estimate of moral objects, but 'in my intercourse and dealing with him.' *Compare* 1 Kings xi. 4. and the description of David in 1 Kings xiv. 8. xv. 5. In the last clause some see an allusion to David's adventure in the cave, when his conscience smote him for meditating violence against Saul. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 6., and compare 1 Sam. xxvi. 23. 24. But whether this be so or not, the clause undoubtedly contains a confession of corruption. *My iniquity* can only mean that to which I am naturally prone and subject. We have here then a further proof that the perfection claimed in the first clause is not an absolute immunity from sin, but an upright purpose and desire to serve God.

25 (24.) *And Jehovah has requited me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands before his eyes.* This verse shows clearly that the futures in v. 21 (20) must be strictly understood. What he there represents himself as confidently hoping, he here professes to have really experienced. In the intervening verses he shows how he had done his part, and now acknowledges that God had faithfully performed his own.

26, 27 (25, 26.) *With the gracious thou wilt show thyself gracious; with the perfect man thou wilt show thyself perfect, with the purified thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the*

*crooked thou wilt show thyself perverse.* What he had previously mentioned as the method of God's dealings towards himself he now describes as a general law of the divine administration. The essential idea is that God is, in a certain sense, to men precisely what they are to him. The particular qualities specified are only given as examples, and might have been exchanged for others without altering the general sense. The form of expression is extremely strong and bold, but scarcely liable to misapprehension, even in v. 27 (26.) No one is in danger of imagining that God can act perversely even to the most perverse. But the same course of proceeding which would be perverse in itself or towards a righteous person, when pursued towards a sinner becomes a mere act of vindictory justice. In the first clause of v. 26 (25) the ambiguous word *gracious* has been chosen to represent the similar term חָסִיד, for the comprehensive use of which see above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3). xii. 2 (1). *Perfect* has the same sense as in v. 23, (22), namely, that of freedom from hypocrisy and malice. The verbs are all of the reflexive form and might be rendered, *thou wilt make thyself gracious, thou wilt act the gracious, or simply thou wilt be gracious* &c, but the common version approaches nearest to the force of the original expression. The first verb of v. 27 (26) occurs once elsewhere (Dan. xii. 10), the rest only here. The forms may have been coined for the occasion, to express the bold conceptions of the writer. The resemblance of the last clause of v. 27 (26) to Lev. xxvi. 23, 24, makes it highly probable that the whole form of this singular dictum was suggested by that passage, the rather as this Psalm abounds in allusions to the Pentateuch and imitations of it.

28 (27.) *For thou wilt save the afflicted people, and lofty eyes thou wilt bring down.* Another general description of God's dealings with mankind, repeated more than once in the New Testament. See Matth. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14

*High looks* or *lofty eyes* is a common Old Testament expression for pride and haughtiness. See below, on Ps. ci. 5. cxyvi. 1 and compare Prov. xxi. 4. xxx. 13. Isai. x. 12. xxxvii. 23. *The afflicted people* means the people of God when in affliction, or considered as sufferers. *Thou* is emphatic: 'however men may despise and maltreat thy afflicted people I know that *thou* wilt save them'

29 (28.) *For thou wilt light my lamp; Jehovah, my God, will illuminate my darkness.* Having ascended from particulars to generals he now reverses the process. On his own experience, as described in vs. 4—25 (3—24), he had founded a general declaration of God's mode of dealing with men, which statement he proceeds now to illustrate by recurring to his own experience. In this second part there is reason to believe that he has reference to the other cases of deliverance in his history, besides those from Saul's persecutions which had furnished the theme of his thanksgiving in the first part of the psalm. In accordance with this difference of subject, it has been observed that in this second part he appears more active, and not merely as an object but an instrument of God's delivering mercy. As to the form of expression in this part, it has been determined by the writer's assuming his position at the close of the Sauline persecution, and describing his subsequent deliverances as still prospective. This was the more convenient as he wished to express a confident assurance of God's goodness, not only to himself individually but to his posterity. A lamp or candle in the house is a common Hebrew figure for prosperity, and its extinction for distress. See Job xviii. 5. 6. xxi. 17. Prov. xxiv. 20. The first clause may also be translated, *thou wilt make my light shine*. The verb in the parallel clause is from another root, and there is consequently no such assonance as in the English version (*light, enlighten*.) The pronoun in the first clause is again emphatic. 'Whatever I may suffer at the hands of others *thou* at least wilt light my candle.' The emphasis is sustained

in the last clause by a sudden change of person and introduction of the divine name.

30 (29.) *For in thee I shall run (through or over) a troop, and in my God I shall leap a wall.* From his ideal post of observation he foresees the military triumphs which awaited him, and which were actually past at the time of composition. The *for*, as in the two preceding verses, connects the illustration with the general proposition in vs. 27—29 (26—28.) ‘This is certainly God’s mode of dealing, *for* I know that he will deal thus with me.’ *In thee*, and *in my God*, i. e. in intimate union with him and possession of him, a much stronger sense than that of mere assistance (*by thee*), which however is included. See below, on Ps. xliv. 6 (5.)—The ellipsis of the preposition, with which the verbs are usually construed, belongs to the license of poetical style. Even in prose, however, we can say, to walk the streets, to leap a wall. To *run a troop* may either mean to run *against* or *through* it; the phrase may therefore be completed so as to have either an offensive or defensive sense. In like manner leaping a wall may either mean escaping from an enemy or storming his defences. Most interpreters prefer the stronger meaning of attack, which is certainly entitled to the preference, unless the writer be supposed to have selected his expressions with a view to the suggestion of both these ideas, which together comprehend all possible varieties of success in war. As if he had said: ‘Weak though I be in myself, I am sure that in conjunction with thee, neither armies nor fortifications shall be able to subdue or even to resist me.’ With David’s tone of triumphant confidence in this verse compare Paul’s in 2 Cor. ii. 14. and Phil. iv. 13.

31 (30.) *The Almighty—perfect is his way—the word of Jehovah is tried—a shield (is) he to all those trusting in him*  
The first clause seems to be an amplification of *my God* in the



preceding verse. *In my God, the Mighty (God), whose way is perfect*, i. e. his mode of dealing, as before described, is free from all taint of injustice. This explanation suggests a further description of Jehovah as a sure protector *His word* here means especially his promise, perhaps with specific allusion to the seventh chapter of 2 Samuel. *Tried*, as metals are tried by fire, and thus proved to be genuine. See above, on Ps. xii. 7 (6.) *A shield*: see above, on Ps. iii. 4 (3.) *Trusting in him*: see above, on Ps. ii. 12.

32 (31.) *For who is God save Jehovah? And who is a rock besides our God?* The *for* shows that this verse gives the ground of the strong assurances contained in that before it. 'I affirm all this, because I recognise Jehovah as the only true God.' *Rock* has the same sense as in v. 3 (2.) The whole verse bears a strong resemblance to 2 Sam. vii. 22.

33 (32.) *The Almighty girding me with strength, and (who) has given (or rendered) my way perfect.* The connexion of the verses is the same as that between vs. 31 (30) and 32 (31.) The *our God* of the preceding verse is here described as *the Almighty girding me &c.* For the true sense of the divine name here and in v. 32 (31), see above, on Ps. v. 5 (4.) vii. 12. (11.) x. 11. 12. xvi. 1. xvii. 6. The imparting of a quality or bestowing of a gift is in various languages described as clothing. Thus the English words *endue* and *invest* have almost lost their original meaning. The figure of girding is peculiarly significant because in the oriental dress the girdle is essential to all free and active motion. Compare Ps. lxxv. 13 (12), as translated in the margin of the English Bible, and Isai. xi. 5.—The last clause may either mean, 'who is faultless in the way by which he leads me,' i. e. whose dispensations towards me are free from all injustice; or, 'who gives my conduct the perfection which belongs to it.' The first construction gives the words the same

sense as in v. 31 (30), but the other is by far the simplest and most natural, and as such entitled to the preference.

34 (33.) *Making my feet like hinds, and on my heights he makes me stand.* The first word properly means equalling, assimilating, the idea of resemblance being expressed in Hebrew both by the verb and by the particle of comparison. The female animal is supposed by some to be mentioned because it was regarded as more fleet, and accordingly we find it used in the Egyptian hieroglyphics as a symbol of swiftness. The name however may be used generally, as in English we apply either the masculine or feminine pronoun to some whole species. *My heights*, those which are to be mine by right of conquest and by Divine gift. The heights may be either the natural high lands of the country or the artificial heights of its fortified places. It has been disputed whether the swiftness mentioned in the first clause has reference to attack or flight. Most probably both were meant to be included, as in v. 30 (29) above. For both reasons swiftness of foot was prized in the heroic age, as appears from Homer's standing description of Achilles. See 2 Sam. ii. 18. 1 Chron. xii. 8.

35 (34.) *Teaching my hands to war, and my arms have bent a bow of brass.* The construction is continued from the preceding verse, all the participles having reference to the name of God in v. 33 (32.) The last clause is a strong expression for extraordinary strength, which is mentioned merely as a heroic quality. The translation *broken* rests on what is now regarded as a false etymology. Brass was used before iron in Egypt and other ancient countries as a material for arms.

36 (35.) *And hast given me a shield, thy salvation, and thy right hand is to hold me up, and thy condescension is to make me great.* In the first clause we may also read *the shield*

*of thy salvation*, or thy shield of salvation, i e. thy saving shield, without material variation of the sense. The futures have reference to the point from which he is surveying things past as still future. The noun in the last clause means *humility*, as an attribute of human character (Prov. xv. 33), but when applied to God, benignant self-abasement, condescending kindness to inferiors. Compare Ps. viii. 5 (4), Isai. lxvi. 1, 2.

37 (36.) *Thou wilt enlarge my steps under me, and my ankles shall not swerve.* To enlarge the steps is to afford ample room for walking freely without hinderance. The opposite figure is that of confined steps. See Prov. iv. 12. Job xviii. 7. The meaning of the whole verse is: thou wilt guide me safely.

38 (37.) *I am to pursue my enemies and overtake them, and not to turn back until I destroy them.* This is not a threat of vengeance, but a confident anticipation of perpetual triumphs, either in his own person or in that of his descendants. The form of expression in the first clause is borrowed from the Song of Moses, Ex. xv. 9. See above on Ps. vii. 6 (5), where the same two verbs are combined. The reference of all these future forms to past time would be not only gratuitous but **ungrammatical**.

39 (38.) *I shall smite them and they cannot rise, they shall fall beneath my feet.* This simply carries out the idea of successful pursuit in the preceding verse.

40 (39.) *And thou hast girded me with strength for the war (or battle), thou wilt bow down my assailants under me.* He returns to God as the author of his triumphs and successes. The first clause blends the ideas expressed in the corresponding clauses of vs. 33, 36 (32, 35.)—*My assailants*, literally, *my insurgents*, those rising up against me. See v. 49 below. and

compare Ps. xliv. 6 (5), lix. 2 (1), Job xxvii. 7. Here again the spirit of the Psalmist is not that of an ambitious conqueror, but of a willing instrument in God's hand, to be used for the promotion of his sovereign purpose.

41 (40.) *And my enemies—thou hast given to me the back—and my haters—I will destroy them.* Each clause begins with an absolute nominative which might be rendered, *as to my enemies, as to my haters.* The remainder of the first clause is highly idiomatic in its form and scarcely admits of an exact translation. The word translated *back* properly means the back of the neck, but is frequently used in such connexions. The meaning of the whole phrase is, thou hast given me their back, i. e. made them to turn it towards me by putting them to flight. This is also a Mosaic form of speech. See Ex. xxiii. 27. and compare Josh vii. 8. 2 Chron. xxix. 6. Ps. xxi. 13 (12.)

42 (41.) *They shall call (for help) and there is no deliverer—upon Jehovah, and he hears them not.* Because they have no covenant relation to him, as the Psalmist had. Their calling on Jehovah does not exclude all reference to heathen foes, as appears from Jon. i. 14.—*Hear*, in the pregnant sense of hearing favourably, granting, answering a prayer. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4).

43 (42.) *And I shall beat them small as dust before the wind, as dirt in the streets I will pour them out.* The comparisons in this verse are intended to express the Psalmist's superiority to his enemies, his consequent contempt for them, and the facility with which he will destroy them. Similar images are not unfrequent in the Old Testament. See for example Isai. x. 6. Zeph. i. 17. Zech. x. 5.

44 (43.) *Thou wilt save me from the strifes of the people.*

*thou wilt place me at the head (or for a chief) of nations; a people I have not known shall serve me.* He was not only to be freed from the internal strifes of his own people, but by that deliverance enabled to subdue other nations. The closing words of the Psalm, and its obvious connexion with the promises in 2 Sam. vii, show that this anticipation was not limited to David's personal triumphs, either at home or abroad, but meant to comprehend the victories of his successors, and especially of him in whom the royal line was at once to end and be perpetuated. It may, therefore, be affirmed with truth that this prediction had its complete fulfilment only in Christ.

45, 46 (44, 45.) *At the hearing of the ear they will obey me, the sons of outland will lie to me; the sons of outland will decay, and tremble out of their enclosures.* The meaning of the first words of this verse is clear from Job xlii. 5. where the hearing of the ear is put in opposition to the sight of the eye, report or hearsay to personal and ocular inspection. The verb translated *will obey*, whenever it occurs elsewhere, is a simple passive of the verb to *hear*, and accordingly some render it here, they who have only been heard of by the hearing of the ear, i. e. those whom I have only heard of but have never seen will feign obedience. But as the corresponding form of the verb to *lie* (רָפָה) is used by Moses actively, in Deut. xxxiii. 29. to which place there is obvious allusion here, the first translation above given is entitled to the preference, and the sense is, that as soon as foreign nations hear of him, they will lie to him, i. e. yield a feigned obedience through the influence of fear, in which sense another form of the same verb is used, not only in the passage of the Pentateuch just cited, but in Ps. lxvi. 3. lxxx. 16 (15).—The old word *outland*, which may still be traced in its derivative adjective *outlandish*, has been here employed to represent a Hebrew word for which we have no equivalent in modern English, and which means *foreign parts* indefinitely or collectively. The

marginal version in the English Bible (*sons of the stranger*) is only an inexact approximation to the form of the original. The verb *decay* which properly denotes the withering of plants (see above, Ps. i. 3), is applied to the wasting of the human subject, and indeed of whole communities, in Ex. xviii. 18. To *tremble from* or *out of* is a pregnant phrase, involving the idea of a verb of motion, and meaning to come forth with fear. The same form of expression may be found in Micah vii. 17, and analogous ones in 1 Sam. xvi. 4. Hosea xi. 11.—*Their enclosures*, their retreats or refuges, perhaps with special reference to military enclosures, such as fortresses and camps.

47 (46.) *Jehovah lives, and blessed be my rock, and high shall be the God of my salvation.* The first phrase, (חַי יְהוָה) which is elsewhere always used as a formula of swearing (*as the Lord liveth*, i. e. as certainly as God exists), is by some interpreters confounded with a kindred phrase (יְהוָה הַמֶּלֶךְ), *vive le roi*, (*long*) *live the king*, and regarded as a kind of acclamation, similar to those which were uttered at the coronation of the Jewish kings (1 Sam. x. 24. 1 Kings i. 25, 39. 2 Kings xi. 12.) But besides the difference of form in Hebrew, such a wish is inappropriate to any but a mortal. There may, however, be an intentional allusion to the custom in question, as well as to the practice of swearing by the life of Jehovah, both of which would naturally be suggested to a Hebrew reader. Jehovah is described as the *living God*, in contrast to dead idols, or imaginary deities, which as Paul says (1 Cor. viii. 4) are nothing in the world. *Blessed be my rock*, the foundation of my hope, my refuge and protector. See above, on v. 3 (2.) The word translated *blessed* does not mean *happy*, but *praised*, and may here have the peculiar sense of *worthy to be praised*, like מְהִלָּה in v. 4 (3) above. It may then be rendered as an affirmation: *my rock ('s) worthy to be praised*. Or it may be taken as a wish: *Praised (be) my rock*, to which there is the less objection as the



preceding proposition is, in fact though not in form, a doxology, i. e. a declaration of what God is in himself, and of that to which he is in consequence entitled. The third phrase, *he shall be high*, may be understood to mean, not only he shall still be glorious, but he shall be magnified as such, exalted by the praises of his creatures. *The God of my salvation*, or, *my God of salvation*, does not merely mean *the God who saves me*, but *my God who is a Saviour*, of whom this is one essential character. Compare Luke i. 47. This epithet is common in the Psalms, and occurs once or twice in the Prophets. (Isai. xvii. 10. Mic vii. 7. Hab. iii. 18.)

42 (47.) *The Mighty (God) who gives revenges to me and has subdued nations under me.* The construction is the same as in vs. 31, 33 (30, 32) above. This verse contains a further description of the God of his salvation, and at the same time justifies the affirmations of the preceding verse. What the Psalmist here rejoices in is not vengeance wreaked upon his personal enemies, but punishment inflicted on the enemies of God through himself as a mere instrument. Not to rejoice in this would have proved him unworthy of his high vocation. With the last clause compare Ps. xlviii. 4 (3.) cxliv. 2.

43 (48.) *Saving me from my enemies; yea, from my assailants (or insurgents), thou wilt raise me high; from the man of violence thou wilt deliver me.* Here again the construction changes from the participle to the finite verb, but with a further change to the second person, which adds greatly to the life and energy of the expression. The *yea* may be taken as a simple copulative, and *assailants* as a mere equivalent to *enemies*. Some prefer however to assume a climax, and to understand the verse as meaning that he had not only been delivered from external foes but from the more dangerous assaults of domestic treason or rebellion. There would then seem to be

an allusion to Absalom's conspiracy. *Thou wilt raise me, set me up on high, beyond the reach of all my enemies.* For a similar expression, see below, Ps. lix. 2 (1), as translated in the margin of the English Bible. *The man of violence* has no doubt reference to Saul, but only as the type of a whole class, Compare Ps. cxi. 2, 5 (1, 4.)

50 (49.) *Therefore I will thank thee among the nations, oh Jehovah, and to thy name will sing.* The first word has reference not merely to the fact of his deliverance and promotion, but to the character in which he had experienced these blessings, and the extent of the divine purpose in bestowing them. 'Therefore—because it is God who has done and is to do all this for me, and because it is in execution of a purpose comprehending the whole race—I will not confine my praises and thanksgiving to my own people, but extend them to all nations.' The performance of this vow has been going on for ages and is still in progress wherever this and other psalms of David are now sung or read. The verse before us is legitimately used by Paul, together with Deut. xxxii. 43. Isai. xi. 1, 10, and Ps. cxvii. 1. to prove that, even under the restrictive institutions of the old economy, God was not the God of the Jews only but of the Gentiles also. (Rom. iii. 29. xv. 9—12.)—The verb in the first clause strictly means *I will confess* or *acknowledge*, but is specially applied to the acknowledgment of gifts received or benefits experienced, and then corresponds almost exactly to our *thank*. The corresponding verb in the last clause means to praise by music. See above, on Ps. vii. 18 (17), ix. 3, 12 (2, 11.)

51 (50.) *Making great the salvations of his King and doing kindness to his Anointed, to David and to his seed unto eternity.* We have here another instance of the favourite construction which connects a sentence with the foregoing context by means of a participle agreeing with the subject of a previous

sentence. See above, vs. 31 (30), 32 (31), 33 (32), 34 (33), 49 (48). *Making great salvations*, saving often and signally. The plural form conveys the idea of fulness and completeness. As the phrase *His Anointed* might have seemed to designate David exclusively, he shows its comprehensive import by expressly adding *David and his seed*, from which it clearly follows that the *Messiah* or *Anointed One* here mentioned is a complex or ideal person, and that Jesus Christ, far from being excluded, is in fact the principal person comprehended, as the last and greatest of the royal line of David, to whom the promises were especially given, in whom alone they are completely verified, and of whom alone the last words of this Psalm could be uttered, in their true and strongest sense, without a falsehood or without absurdity. In this conclusion, as in other portions of the Psalm, there is a clear though tacit reference to the promise in 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, 25, 26, where several of the very same expressions are employed. Compare also Ps. xxviii. 8. lxxxiv. 10 (9). and Ps. lxxxix. *passim*.

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Another copy of this Psalm is found recorded near the close of David's history (2 Sam. ch. xxii.), which confirms the intimation in the title, that it was not composed in reference to any particular occasion, but in a general retrospection of the mercies of his whole life. The two texts often differ, both in form and substance, which has led some to suppose, that one is an erroneous transcript of the other. But this conclusion is forbidden by the uniform consistency of each considered in itself, as well as by the obvious indications of design in the particular variations, which may be best explained by supposing, that David himself, for reasons not recorded, prepared a twofold form of this sublime composition, which is the less improbable as there are other unambiguous traces of the same process in

the Old Testament, and in the writings of David himself. See below, the exposition of Ps. liii, and compare that of Isaiah, ch. xxxvi—xxxix. If this be a correct hypothesis, the two forms of the eighteenth psalm may be treated as distinct and independent compositions, and it has therefore been thought most advisable, both for the purpose of saving room and of avoiding the confusion which a parallel interpretation might have caused, to confine the exposition in this volume to that form of the psalm, which was preserved in the Psalter for permanent use in public worship, and which exhibits strong internal proofs of being the original or first conception, although both are equally authentic and inspired.

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## PSALM XIX.

THIS psalm consists of three parts. The subject of the first is God's revelation of himself in his material works, vs. 2—7 (1—6.) That of the second is the still more glorious revelation of himself in his law, vs. 8—11 (7—10.) The third shows the bearing of these truths upon the personal character and interest of the writer, and of all who are partakers of his faith, vs. 12—15 (11—14.)

The object of the psalm is not to contrast the moral and material revelations, but rather to identify their author and their subject. The doctrinal sum of the whole composition is, that the same God who reared the frame of nature is the giver of a law, and that this law is in all respects worthy of its author.

1. *To the Chief Musician, a Psalm by David.* The form

of this inscription is the same as that of Ps. xiii. Its historical correctness is attested by its position in the Psalter, its resemblance to Ps. viii, and its peculiar style and spirit.

2. *The heavens (are) telling the glory of God, and the work of his hands (is) the firmament declaring.* The participles are expressive of continued action. The *glory of God* is the sum of his revealed perfections, (compare Ps. xxiv. 7—10. xxix. 3. Rom. i. 20.) The *expanse* or *firmament* is used as an equivalent to *heaven*, even in the history of the creation, Gen. i. 8. To declare the work of his hands is to show what he can do and has actually done. The common version *handywork* means nothing more than *hand-work*; to take *handy* as an epithet of praise is a vulgar error.

3 (2.) *Day to day shall pour out speech, and night to night shall utter knowledge.* Both verbs are peculiar to the poetical dialect and books of the Old Testament. *Pour out*, in a copious ever-gushing stream. As the participles of v. 2 (1) express constant action, so the futures here imply continuance in all time to come. *Speech* means the declaration of God's glory, and *knowledge* the knowledge of the same great object. The idea of perpetual testimony is conveyed by the figure of one day and night following another as witnesses in unbroken succession.

4 (3.) *There is no speech, and there are no words; not at all is their voice heard.* As the first clause might have seemed to contradict the first clause of v. 3 (2), the Psalmist adds *no words*, to show that he here uses *speech* in the strict sense of articulate language.—The first word of the last clause is properly a noun, meaning cessation or defect, non-entity, and here used as a more emphatic negative, expressed in the translation by the phrase *not at all*.—*Their voice* might either be referred exclusively to the *heaven* and *firmament* of v. 2 (1.) or extended to the *day*

and *night* of v. 3 (2.) But the first is the true construction, as appears from the next verse. The absence of articulate language, far from weakening the testimony, makes it stronger. Even without speech or words, the heavens testify of God to all men. This construction of the sentence is much simpler as well as more exact than the ancient one, retained in the common version, "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," or that preferred by others, "it is not a speech or language whose voice is not heard." The true sense is given in the margin of the English Bible.

5 (4.) *In all the earth has gone out their line, and in the end of the world (are) their words. For the sun he has pitched a tent in them.* The word rendered *line* always means a measuring line, and in Jer. xxxi. 39 is combined in that sense with the same verb as here. The idea is, that their province or domain is co-extensive with the earth, and that they speak with authority even in its remotest parts.—*Words* may also be construed with the verb of the first clause, but it will then be necessary to translate the preposition *to*. The explanation of *line* as meaning the string of a musical instrument, and then the sound which it produces, although favoured by the ancient versions, is entirely at variance with Hebrew usage.—The subject of the verb in the last clause is the name of God expressed in v. 2 (1) above.—*Pitched a tent*, provided a dwelling, or without a figure, assigned a place. *In them* must refer to *the heavens* mentioned in v. 2 (1), which makes it probable that all the plural pronouns in the intervening clauses have the same antecedent. The sun is introduced in this sentence probably because his apparent course is a measure of the wide domain described in the first clause. It must be co-extensive with the earth, because the sun which visits the whole earth has his habitation in the sky. This boundless extension of the heavens and their testimony is used by Paul (Rom. x. 18) to signify the general



diffusion of the gospel, and the same thing might have taught the earlier Jews that their exclusive privileges were granted only for a time and as a means to a more glorious end.

6 (5.) *And he (is) as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber ; he rejoices as a mighty man to run a race.* The second simile has reference to the sun's daily course, the first to his vigorous and cheerful re-appearance after the darkness of the night. By a fine transition, the general idea of a tent or dwelling is here exchanged for the specific one of a nuptial couch or chamber. *Rejoices*, literally, *will rejoice*, forever as he now does.

7 (6.) *From the end of the heavens (is) his outgoing, and his circuit even to the ends of them, and there is none (or nothing) hidden from his heat.* What is said in v. 5 (4) of the heavens is here said of the sun, to wit, that his domain is co-extensive with the earth or habitable world. The last clause is added to show that it is not an ineffective presence, but one to be felt as well as seen. The sun's heat is mentioned, not in contrast with his light, but as its inseparable adjunct.—The plural *ends* seems to be added to the singular in order to exhaust the meaning, or at least to strengthen the expression. The word translated *circuit* includes the idea of return to a starting-point. The Hebrew preposition properly means *up to* (or *down to*) their very extremity.

8 (7.) *The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul ; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.* The God, whose glory is thus shown forth by the material creation, is the author of a spiritual law, which the Psalmist now describes in the next three verses, by six characteristic names, six qualifying epithets, and six moral effects produced by it. In the verse before us, besides the usual term *law*, it is called God's

*testimony*, i. e. the testimony which he bears for truth and against iniquity. It is described as *perfect*, i. e. free from all defect or blemish, and as *sure*, i. e. definite, decided, and infallible. Its two effects, mentioned in this verse, are, first, that of *restoring the soul*, i. e. the life and spirits exhausted by calamity. See below, on Ps. xxiii. 3, and compare Ruth iv. 15. Lam. i. 11. 16. The effect of *converting the soul* would not have been attributed to the law in this connexion, where the writer is describing the affections cherished towards the law by men already converted, which removes all apparent inconsistency with Paul's representation of the law as working death, and at the same time the necessity of making the law mean the gospel, or in any other way departing from the obvious and usual import of the Hebrew word. The other effect ascribed to the law is that of *making wise the simple*, not the foolish, in the strong sense in which that term is applied to the ungodly—see above, on Ps. xiv. 1—but those imperfectly enlightened and still needing spiritual guidance, a description applicable, more or less, to all believers. It is a singular fact that while this usage of the Hebrew word is peculiar to David, Solomon constantly applies it to the culpable simplicity of unconverted men. (See Ps. cxvi. 6. cxix. 130. Prov. i. 22. vii. 7. ix. 4. xiv. 15 &c.)—In like manner Paul describes the “sacred scriptures” as *able to make wise unto salvation*. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

9 (8.) *The statutes of Jehovah (are) right, rejoicing the heart ; the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.* The words translated *statute* and *commandment* differ very slightly from each other, the one expressing more distinctly the idea of a charge or commission, the other that of a prescription or direction. There is also no great difference between the epithets applied in this verse to the law of God, which is *right*, as being an exact expression of his rectitude, and *pure*, as being free from all taint of injustice or iniquity. The first effect

described is that of *rejoicing the heart*, to wit, the heart loving righteousness and consequently desirous of knowing what is right by knowing what is acceptable to God, and what required by him. The other effect *enlightening the eyes*, is understood by some of intellectual illumination with respect to spiritual things. But it is more agreeable to Hebrew usage to suppose an allusion to the dimness of the eyes produced by extreme weakness and approaching death, recovery from which is figuratively represented as an enlightening of the eyes. See above, on Ps. xiii. 4 (3), and compare Ps. xxxiv. 6 (5.) The figure, thus explained, bears a strong resemblance to *restoring the soul* in the preceding verse, the one referring rather to the senses and the other to the life itself.

10 (9.) *The fear of Jehovah is clean, standing forever; the judgments of Jehovah are truth, they are righteous altogether.* As the fear of Jehovah, in its proper sense, would here be out of place, and as the law was designed to teach men how to fear the Lord (Deut. xvii. 19), the phrase may here be understood as a description of the law viewed in reference to this peculiar purpose, the *fear of the Lord* being put for that which leads or teaches men to fear him, a sense which the expression is supposed to have in several other places. See Ps. xxxiv. 12 (11.) Prov. i. 29. ii. 5. xv. 33.—*Standing forever*, of perpetual obligation. Even Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. See Matt. v. 17, 18. With the form of expression here compare Ps. xxxiii. 11. cxii. 3.—*Judgments* are properly judicial decisions, but are here put, as in Ps. xviii. 23 (22), for all God's requisitions. *They are truth (itself)* may be a strong expression meaning they are perfectly and absolutely true; but as this would make the last clause little more than a tautology, the first phrase may be understood to mean that they are really that which they purport and claim to be, and therefore must be *righteous altogether*, i. e. all, without exception, righteous, which

is tantamount, in fact though not in form, to *wholly* or *completely* righteous.

11 (10.) (*Judgments*) *to be desired more than gold and much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the dropping of the combs.* The description of the law of God is wound up by comparing it to the costliest and sweetest substances in common use. The sense of the passive participle is like that in Ps. xviii. 4 (3.) Its plural form, and the article prefixed to it in Hebrew, show that it is to be construed with *judgments*, and that the sentence is continued from the foregoing verse, as in Ps. xviii. 31 (30), 33 (32), 34 (33), 35 (34), 48 (47), 51 (50).—The Hebrew answering to *fine gold* is a single word (יָפֶה), not used in prose, and by some supposed to mean solid or massive gold, but according to a more probable etymology denoting purified or fine gold. The combination here used is found also in Ps. cxix. 127. See also Prov. viii. 19, and compare Ps. xxi. 4 (3) below. To make the resemblance of the clauses perfect, the usual word for *honey* is followed by a beautiful periphrasis, denoting that kind which was most highly valued. The ideas expressed by both comparisons are those of value and delightfulness.—As the preceding verses describe what the law is in itself and in its general effects, so this seems to express what it is to the Psalmist's apprehensions and affections, thus affording a transition from the comprehensive doctrines of the foregoing context to the practical and personal appropriation of those doctrines, which now follows and concludes the psalm.

12 (11.) *Moreover thy servant is enlightened by them; in keeping them there is much reward.* The verb in the first clause is used with special reference to admonition and warning against danger. See Ecc. iv. 13. Ez. xxxiii. 4, 5, 6. Ecc. xii. 12. The plural suffixes have reference to *judgments* in v. 10 (9) above.—*Reward* is here used not to signify a recompense

earned in strict justice, but a gratuity bestowed. The spirit of the passage is the same as in 1 Cor. xv. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 8. The phrase *thy servant* brings the general doctrines of the foregoing context into personal application to the writer.

13 (12.) *Errors who shall understand? Clear thou me from hidden ones!* The word translated *errors* is akin to one sometimes used in the Law to denote sins of inadvertence, error, or infirmity, as distinguished from deliberate, wilful, and high-handed sins, such as are deprecated in the next verse. See Lev. iv. 2. 27. Num. xv. 27. Against such sins no wisdom or vigilance can wholly guard.—The word translated *clear* is also borrowed from the Law, and means not so much to cleanse by renovation of the heart as to acquit by a judicial sentence. See Ex. xxxiv. 7. Num. xiv. 18. Such an acquittal, in the case of sinners against God, involves the idea of a free forgiveness.

14 (13.) *Also from presumptuous (ones) withhold thy servant; then shall I be perfect and be clear from much transgression.* As he prays for the forgiveness of his inadvertent sins, so he prays for the prevention of deliberate ones. The Hebrew word (זָדִים) properly denotes proud men, but seems to be here applied to sins by a strong personification. The use of the verbal root and its derivatives in the Old Testament may be seen by comparing Ex. xxi. 14. Deut. xvii. 12. xviii. 22. 1 Sam. xvii. 28.—To be perfect has the same sense as in Ps. xviii. 24—26 (23—25.) That it does not there mean sinless perfection is confirmed by the language of the verse before us.—*The great transgression*, as if referring to some one particular offence, is not the true sense of the Hebrew phrase, which is indefinite and perfectly analogous to that rendered *much* (or *great*) *reward* in v. 12 (11) above.

15 (14.) *(Then) shall be for acceptance (or acceptable) the*

*sayings of my mouth, and the thought of my heart before thee, Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer.* The simplest and most obvious construction of the Hebrew sentence makes it a direct continuation of the last clause of v. 14 (13), and like it an anticipation of the happy effects to be expected from an answer to the foregoing prayers. If his sins of ignorance could be forgiven and the deliberate sins, to which his natural corruption prompts him, hindered by divine grace, he might hope not only to avoid much guilt but to be the object of God's favour. As this confident anticipation really involves a wish that it may be fulfilled, there is little real difference between the construction above given and the common version: *let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable &c.* It is much more natural however to connect the words *before thee* with *my meditation* which immediately precedes, than with the first words of the verse as in the English Bible. *What I think in thy presence* is then joined with *the words of my mouth* to express all prayer, whether clothed in words or not. See above, on Ps. v. 2 (1.)—The prayer or expectation of acceptance in this clause derives peculiar beauty from the obvious allusion to the frequent use of the same Hebrew phrase (לְרָצוֹן) in the law of Moses, to denote the acceptance of the sacrificial offerings, or rather the acceptance of the offerer on account of them. See Ex. xxviii. 38. Lev. xix. 5, 7. xxii. 19, 20, 29. xxiii. 11. Isai. lvi. 7. lx. 7. Rom. xii. 1. This allusion also serves to suggest the idea, not conveyed by a translation, of atonement, expiation, as the ground of the acceptance which the Psalmist hopes or prays for.



## PSALM XX.

A PRAYER for the use of the ancient church in time of war. Addressing her visible head, she wishes him divine assistance and success, vs. 2—6 (1—5), and expresses a strong confidence that God will answer her petition, vs. 7—9 (6—8), which she then repeats and sums up in conclusion, v. 10 (9).

There is no trace of this psalm having been composed with reference to any particular occasion, its contents being perfectly appropriate to every case in which the chosen people, under their theocratic head, engaged in war against the enemies of God and Israel.

1. *To the Chief Musician.* Written for his use and entrusted to him for execution. As in all other cases, this inscription shows the psalm to have been written, not for the expression of mere personal feelings, but to be a vehicle of pious sentiment to the collective body of God's people.—*A Psalm by David.* The correctness of this statement is not only free from any positive objection, but confirmed by the whole tone and style of the performance, as well as by its intimate connexion with the next psalm. See below, on Ps. xxi. 1.

2 (1.) *Jehovah hear thee in the day of trouble! The name of Jacob's God exalt thee!* The name of God, the revelation of his nature in his acts. 'May those divine attributes, which have been so often manifested in the experience of the chosen

people, be exercised for thy protection. See above, on Ps. v 12 (11.)—*The God of Jacob*, of the patriarch so called, and of his seed. See Matt. xxii. 32.—*Exalt thee*, raise thee beyond the reach of danger. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) xviii. 3, 49 (2, 48.)

3 (2.) (*May Jehovah*) *send thee help from (his) sanctuary, and from Zion sustain thee.* The mention of Zion and the sanctuary shows that Jehovah is appealed to as the king of his people, and as such not only able but bound by covenant to afford them aid. See below, on v. 10 (9.) *Sustain thee*, hold thee up, the same verb that is used in Ps. xviii. 36 (35.) Both verbs may also be translated as simple futures, *will send, will sustain*; but see below.

4 (3.) (*May Jehovah*) *remember all thy gifts and accept thy offering. Selah.* The word *remember* in the first clause seems to involve an allusion to the *memorial* (זִכָּרֹן) a name given in the sacrificial ritual to that part of the vegetable offering which was burnt upon the altar. See Lev. ii. 2. vi. 8 (15).—The word translated *gifts*, although properly generic, is specifically used to denote the vegetable offerings of the law, while the word translated *offering* is the technical name of the principal animal sacrifice. They are put together to describe these two species of oblation. Compare Ps. xl. 7. (6.) Jer. xvii. 26. Dan. ix. 27.—The verb translated *accept* means elsewhere to make fat (Ps. xxiii. 5), or to remove the ashes of the altar. (Ex. xxvii. 3. Num. iv. 13.) Some give it here the sense of turning into ashes or consuming, others that of pronouncing fat and therefore fit for sacrifice. In either case acceptance is implied. The optative form of the verb in the original seems to confirm the sense already put upon the foregoing futures. From this verse it has been inferred, with some probability, that the whole psalm was specially intended to be used at the sacrifice offered by the Israelites before a campaign

a battle. (See 1 Sam. xiii. 9, 10.) To this some add the supposition, that the *selah*, in the verse before us, marks the pause in the performance of the psalm, during which the sacrifice was actually offered. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2).

5 (4.) (*May he*) *give thee according to thy heart, and all thy counsel* (or *design*) *fulfil*. This is not a vague wish for success in general, but a prayer for success on the particular occasion when the psalm was to be used.—*Thy heart*, thy desire. *Thy counsel*, the plan which thou hast formed and undertaken to execute in God's name and for the protection or deliverance of his people.

6 (5.) *May we rejoice in thy deliverance, and in the name of our God display a banner!* *May Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions!* The phrase *thy deliverance* may mean that wrought or that experienced by thee. In all probability both ideas are included. *In the name of our God*, and therefore not as a mere secular triumph. The second verb (נִרְבֵּן) seems to be connected with a noun (דִּגְלָן) used by Moses to denote the banners under which the four great divisions of the host marched through the wilderness (Num. i. 52. ii. 2, 3, 10, 18, 25. x. 14.) Hence the conjectural translation, 'may we set up (or display) a banner.' But as the participle of the same verb seems, in the only other place where it occurs (Song of Sol. v. 10), to signify *distinguished* or *exalted*, others follow the Septuagint and Vulgate in translating, *may we be lifted up* or *magnified*.—The last clause is a comprehensive prayer, equivalent in meaning to v. 5 (4) above, and including not merely what had been expressly specified, but all that the theocratic sovereign might desire or attempt in conformity with God's will, whether known to the whole body of his followers or not. This clause concludes the first division of the psalm by recurring to the theme with which

it opens, and with which again the whole psalm closes. See below, on v. 10 (9.)

7 (6.) *Now I know that Jehovah has saved his Anointed—he will hear him from his holy heavens—with the saving strength of his right hand.* What was asked in the foregoing context is here said to be already granted. Hence some imagine that a battle or other decisive event must be supposed to intervene. But this, besides being highly improbable and forced in so brief a composition, is forbidden by the immediate recurrence to the future form, *he will hear*. A far more natural solution is, that this verse expresses a sudden conviction or assurance that the preceding prayers are to be answered. As if he had said: ‘such are my requests, and I know that Jehovah has already granted them, so that in his purpose and to the eye of faith, his Anointed is already safe and has already triumphed.’ The change to the first person singular does not indicate a different speaker, but merely puts what follows into the mouth of each individual believer or of the whole body viewed as an ideal person.

The second member of the sentence may be best explained as a parenthesis, leaving the third to be construed directly with the first, as in the version above given.—In this verse we have two examples of a common Hebrew idiom, one of them a very strong one. The phrase translated *from his holy heavens* might seem to mean *the heavens of his holiness*; but the true construction is *his heavens of holiness*, i. e. the heavens where the Holy One resides, and from which his assistance must proceed. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. xi. 4. The attribute of holiness is mentioned to exalt still further the divine and sacred nature of the warfare and the victory to which the psalm relates. Another example of the Hebrew idiom before referred to is *the saving strength of his right hand*, which literally rendered is *the strengths of the salvation of his right hand*. The plural *strengths* may

either be intensive or refer to various exertions of the power here described. The right hand has the same sense as in Ps. xviii. 36 (35.) Here, as in Ps. xviii. 51 (50), *His Messiah or Anointed One* includes the whole succession of genuine theocratic kings, not excepting Him whose representatives they were, and in whom the royal line was at the same time closed and made perpetual.

8 (7.) *These in chariots and these in horses, and we in the name of Jehovah our God, will glory.* All the objects are connected by the same preposition with the same verb, namely, that at the end of the sentence. In order to retain the preposition, which must otherwise be varied and thereby obscure the structure of the sentence, the verb *glory*, which is construed with the preposition *in*, has been substituted for the strict sense of the verb, *we will cause to be remembered*, i. e. mention or commemorate. See Ex. xxiii. 13. Amos vi. 10. Isai. xlviii. 1. lxiii. 7. The insertion of the verb *trust*, in the English versions of the first clause, is entirely gratuitous. *These and these* is the Hebrew idiom for *some and others*. Compare *this to this*, in Ex. xiv. 20. Isai. vi. 3.—The verb, in the case before us, may have been selected in allusion to the cognate form in v. 4 (3) above. ‘As God has remembered thy offerings, so we will cause his name to be remembered?’—*Our God* is again emphatic and significant, as showing that the whole psalm has reference to the covenant relation between God and his people represented by their theocratic sovereign. With the contrast in this verse compare 1 Sam. xvii. 45. Isai. xxxi. 3. Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17.

9 (8.) *They have bowed and fallen, and we have risen and stood upright.* Here, as in v. 7 (6), the past tense expresses the certainty of the event, or rather the confidence with which it is expected. The emphatic *they* at the beginning means the enemies and oppressors of God’s people. *We have arisen* seems

to imply a previous prostration and subjection.—The last verb occurs only here in this form, which is properly reflexive, and may be explained to mean, *we have straightened ourselves up*

10 (9.) *Jehovah save!* *Let the king hear us in the day we call*, or still more closely, *in the day of our calling*. The Septuagint and Vulgate make *the king* a part of the first clause: ‘Jehovah save the king,’ (*Domine saluum fac regem.*) But this not only violates the masoretic accents, which, though not ultimately binding, are entitled to respect as a traditional authority, but separates the verb in the last clause from its subject, so that both the ancient versions just referred to have been under the necessity of changing the third into the second person (*hear us.*) The first clause is besides more expressive and emphatic without *the king* than with it. Nothing could be more pregnant or sonorous than the laconic prayer, *Jehovah save!* The object is of course to be supplied from v. 7 (6), and from the tenor of the whole psalm. The other construction, it is true, enables us to make *the King* of this verse the same person with *the Anointed* of v. 7 (6.) But far from any disadvantage, there is great force and beauty, in referring the expected blessing to the true king of Israel, whom David and his followers only represented. See Deut. xxxiii. 5. Ps. xlviii. 3 (2.) Matt. v. 35.—By taking the last verb as a future proper (*the king will hear us*) the psalm may be made to close with a promise or rather with a confident anticipation of God’s blessing. Most interpreters, however, prefer to make it optative, and thus to let the psalm conclude as it began with an expression of intense desire



## PSALM XXI.

As in the eighteenth psalm David publicly thanks God for the promises contained in 2 Samuel vii, so here he puts a similar thanksgiving into the mouth of the church or chosen people. In vs. 2—7 (1—6), the address is to Jehovah, and the king is spoken of in the third person. In v. 8 (7), this form of speech is used in reference to both. In vs. 9—13 (8—12), the address is to the king. In v. 14 (13) it returns to Jehovah. As to the substance or contents of these successive parts, the first praises God for what he has bestowed upon the king, vs. 2—7 (1—6.) In the second, there is a transition to another theme, v. 8 (7.) The third congratulates the king on what he is to do and to enjoy through the divine mercy, vs. 9—13 (8—12.) The fourth returns to the point from which the whole set out, v. 14 (13.) The opinion that this psalm relates to the fulfilment of the prayer in that before it, seems to be inconsistent with its structure and contents as just described. They are rather parallel than consecutive, the principal difference being this, that while the twentieth psalm relates to the specific case of assistance and success in war, the twenty-first has reference to the whole circle of divine gifts bestowed upon the Lord's Anointed

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.* The correctness of the first inscription is apparent from the structure of the psalm, throughout which the speaker is the ancient church. The correctness of the other may be argued from the genera-

resemblance of the style to that of the Davidic psalms, from numerous coincidences of expression with the same, and from the tone of lively hope which seems to indicate the recent date of the divine communication, especially when compared with psalms which otherwise resemble it, such as the eighty-ninth. The particular resemblance between this psalm and the twentieth makes them mutually testify to one another's genuineness and authenticity.

2 (1.) *Jehovah, in thy strength shall the king rejoice, and in thy salvation how shall he exult!* This verse commences the description of God's favour to the king with a general statement, afterwards amplified in vs. 3—7 (2—6.) *Thy strength*, as imparted to him, or as exercised in his deliverance, which last agrees best with the parallel expression, *thy salvation*, i. e. thy deliverance of him from the evils which he felt or feared. *In thy strength and salvation*, i. e. in the contemplation and experience of it. The future verbs show that the gift has not yet been consummated, without excluding the idea of it as begun already.

3 (2.) *The desire of his heart thou hast given unto him, and the quest of his lips hast not withholden. Selah.* The occasion of the joy and exultation mentioned in the preceding verse is now more particularly set forth. It is easy to imagine, although not recorded, that the great promise in the seventh chapter of 2 Samuel was in answer to the fervent and long continued prayers of David for a succession in his own family.— The word translated *quest* occurs only here, but its sense is determined by the parallelism and the Arabic analogy. The combination of the positive and negative expressions of the same idea (*given* and *not withholden*) is a favourite Hebrew idiom.

4 (3.) *For thou wilt come before him with blessings of*

*goodness, thou wilt set upon his head a crown of gold.* This, as Luther observes, is an answer to the question what he had desired. The *for* connects it with the statement in the foregoing verse which is here explained and justified. As the preterites in v. 3 (2) show that his request was granted in the divine purpose, so the futures here show how it was to be fulfilled in fact. *Come before, come* to meet in a friendly manner. See above, on Ps. xvii. 13. xviii. 6 (5), and compare Deut. xxiii. 5 (4.) — *Blessings of good*, not blessings prompted by the divine goodness, but conferring, or consisting in, good fortune, happiness. See above, on Ps. xvi. 2.—The reference in the last clause is not to David's literal coronation at the beginning of his reign, nor to the golden crown which he took from the Ammonitish king of Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 30), but to his ideal coronation by the granting of these glorious favors to himself and his successors. The divine communication in the seventh of 2d Samuel seems to be here viewed, as the only real coronation of David as a theocratic sovereign. The last word in the sentence is the same that was translated *pure gold* when contrasted with the ordinary word for gold, Ps. xix. 11 (10.)

5 (4.) *Life he asked of thee, thou hast given (it) to him, length of days, perpetuity and eternity.* By disregarding the masoretic interpunction, the construction may be simplified without a change of sense. 'Life he asked of thee, thou hast given him length of days,' &c. The last words of the verse are often used adverbially to mean *for ever and ever*; but as they are both nouns, it is best to put them here in apposition with the same part of speech which immediately precedes. This last clause shows that the life which David prayed for was not personal longevity, but the indefinite continuation of his race, an honour which was granted to him, even beyond his hopes and wishes, in the person of our Saviour. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16. Ps. lxxxix. 5 (4.) cxxxii. 12.

6 (5.) *Great shall be his majesty in thy salvation; glory and honour thou wilt put upon him.* His personal experience of God's saving grace, and his connexion with the great scheme of salvation for mankind, would raise him to a dignity far beyond that of any other monarch, and completely justifying even the most exalted terms used in Scripture, from the charge of adulation or extravagance.

7 (6.) *For thou wilt make him a blessing to eternity; thou wilt gladden him with joy by thy countenance (or presence.)* He shall not only be blessed himself, but a blessing to others, the idea and expression being both derived from the promise to Abraham in Gen. xii. 2, an allusion which serves also to connect the Davidic with the Abrahamic covenant, and thus to preserve unbroken the great chain of Messianic prophecies. *Make him a blessing*, literally, *place him for (or constitute him) blessing*. The plural form suggests variety and fullness, as in Ps. xviii. 51 (50). xx. 7 (6.) *By thy countenance*, or *with thy face*, i. e., by looking on him graciously, not merely in thy presence or before thee, as the place of the enjoyment, but by the sight of thee, as its cause or source. See above, on Ps xvi. 11.

8 (7.) *For the king (is) trusting in Jehovah, and in the grace of the Most High he shall not be moved.* The consummation of this glorious promise was indeed far distant, but to the eye of faith distinctly visible. *In the grace* seems to mean something more than *through the grace (or favour) of the Most High*, as the ground of his assurance, or the source of his security. The words appear to qualify the verb itself, and to denote that he shall not be shaken from his present standing in God's favour. The use of the third person, in this verse, with reference both to God and the king, makes it a kind of connect-

ing link between the direct address to God in the first part of the Psalm, and the direct address to the king in the second.

9 (8.) *Thy hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find (those) hating thee.* Having shown what God would do for his Anointed, the Psalm now describes what the latter shall accomplish through Divine assistance. Corresponding to this variation in the subject, is that in the object of address, which has been already noticed. By a kind of climax in the form of expression, *hand* is followed by *right hand*, a still more emphatic sign of active strength. To *find*, in this connexion, includes the ideas of detecting and reaching. Compare 1 Sam. xxiii. 17. Isai. x. 10; in the latter of which places the verb is construed with a preposition ( $\dot{\bar{\iota}}$ ), as it is in the first clause of the verse before us, whereas in the other clause it governs the noun directly. If any difference of meaning was intended, it is probably not greater than that between *find* and *find out* in English.

10 (9.) *Thou shalt make them like a fiery furnace at the time of thy presence; Jehovah in his wrath shall swallow them up, and fire shall devour them.* The ascription of this destroying agency to God in the last clause serves to show that the king acts merely as his instrument. *Thou shalt make*, literally *set or place*, i. e. put them in such or such a situation. *A fiery furnace*, literally, *a furnace (or oven) of fire*. To make them like a furnace here means, not to make them the destroyers of others, but, by a natural abbreviation, to make them as if they were in a fiery furnace. *At the time of thy presence*, literally *thy face*, which may be understood to mean, *when thou lookest at them*.

11 (10.) *Their fruit shalt thou make to perish from the earth, and their seed from (among) the sons of man (or Adam.)* This extends the threatened destruction of the enemies to all their

generations. The same figurative use of *fruit* occurs in Hos. ix. 16.

12 (11.) *For they stretched out evil over thee; they devised a plot; they shall not be able* (to effect it.) The figure of the first clause is the same as in 1 Ch. xxi. 10. (Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 12.) The idea here is that they threatened to bring evil on thee. As the verb to *be able* is sometimes used absolutely, it translated, *they shall not prevail*.

13 (12.) *For thou shalt make them turn their back; with thy (bow) strings shalt make ready against their face.* The common version of the first word (*therefore*) is not only contrary to usage, but disturbs the sense by obscuring the connexion with the foregoing verse, which is this: 'they shalt not prevail, *because* thou shalt make them turn their back.' This last phrase, in Hebrew, is so strongly idiomatic that it scarcely admits of an exact translation. *Thou shalt make (or place) them shoulder.* See above, on Ps. xviii. 41 (40), where a similar idiom occurs. In the verse before us, the chronological succession is reversed; it was by shooting at their face that he should make them turn their back. The true relation of the clauses is denoted, in the English Bible, by supplying a particle of time: 'thou shalt make them turn their back (when) thou shalt make ready (thine arrows) upon thy strings against the face of them.' The version *make ready* is also a correct one, although some translate the phrase *take aim*, which is really expressed by another form of the same verb. The true sense of the one here used is clear from Ps. xi. 2, and the distinctive use of both from Ps. vii. 13, 14 (12, 13.)

14 (13.) *Be high, Jehovah, in thy strength; we will sing and celebrate thy power.* Here the Psalm returns to God as its great theme, and gives him all the glory. *Be high*, exalted, both in



thyself and in the praises of thy people. See above, on Ps. xviii. 47 (46.) *Thy strength and power*, as displayed in the strength given to thine Anointed. *Celebrate* by music, as the Hebrew verb always means. There is a beautiful antithesis in this verse, as if he had said: thou hast only to deserve praise, we will give it.

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## PSALM XXII.

THE subject of this Psalm is the deliverance of a righteous sufferer from his enemies, and the effect of this deliverance on others. It is so framed as to be applied without violence to any case belonging to the class described, yet so that it was fully verified only in Christ, the head and representative of the class in question. The immediate speaker in the Psalm is an ideal person, the righteous servant of Jehovah, but his words may, to a certain extent, be appropriated by any suffering believer, and by the whole suffering church, as they have been in all ages.

The Psalm may be divided into three nearly equal parts. The first pleads the necessity of God's interposition, arising from his covenant relation to the sufferer, vs. 2—11 (1—10.) The second argues the same thing from the imminence of the danger, vs. 12—22 (11—21.) The third declares the glorious effects which must follow from an answer to the foregoing prayer, vs. 23—32 (22—31). Vs. 12 (11) and 22 (21) form connecting links between the first and second, second and third parts.

1. *To the Chief Musician. On the hind of the morning. A Psalm by David.* Designed for the permanent use of the church, and therefore not relating to mere individual or private interests. The second clause of the inscription is one of those enigmatical titles in which David seems to have delighted. See above, on Ps. v. 1. vii. 1. ix. 1. xvi. 1. The opinion that it refers to the melody or subject of some other poem, is less probable than that it describes the theme of this. The *hind* may then be a poetical figure for persecuted innocence, and the *morning*, or rather *dawn*, for deliverance after long distress. Compare 2 Sam. i. 19. Prov. vi. 5. Isai. xiii. 14, with Isai. viii. 20. xlvii. 11. lviii. 8, 10. Hos. vi. 3. x. 15. The use of such emblems here is less surprising, as this Psalm abounds in figures drawn from the animal kingdom. See below, vs. 13 (12), 14 (13); 17 (16), 21 (20), 22 (21).

2 (1.) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, far from my deliverance, the words of my roaring?* In this verse and the next we have the sufferer's complaint, the summary description of his danger and distress, the highest point of which is here described as the sense of desertion or abandonment on God's part. 'Why hast thou left me so to suffer, that I cannot but consider myself finally deserted?' The use of these words by our Saviour on the cross, with a slight variation from the Hebrew (Matt. xxvii. 46. Mark xv. 34), shows how eminently true the whole description is of him, but does not make him the exclusive subject. The Divine name here used is the one descriptive of God's power (יְהוָה), and may therefore be considered as including the idea of *my strength*. 'Why hast thou, whom I regarded as my strength, my support, and my protector, thus forsaken me in this extremity?' The last clause admits of several constructions. 'Far from my deliverance (are) the words of my roaring,' i. e. they are far from having the effect of saving me. Or the question may be repeated: '(Why art thou) far from my

help and the words of my roaring?' Or the same idea may be expressed by a simple affirmation: '(Thou art) far from my help,' &c. But the simplest construction is to put these words into apposition with the object of address in the first clause, and throw the whole into one sentence. 'Why hast thou forsaken me, (standing or remaining) far from my help, i. e. too far off to help and save me, or even to hear the words of my roaring?' This last combination shows that although the figure of roaring is borrowed from the habits of the lower animals, the subject to which it is applied must be a human one, and as such capable of articulate speech. The roaring of the psalmist was not the mere instinctive utterance of physical distress, but the complaint of an intelligent and moral agent. Compare Isaiah xxxviii. 14.

3 (2.) *My God, I call by day and thou wilt not answer, and by night and there is no silence to me.* The divine name here used is the common Hebrew word for *God*, denoting an object of religious worship. *I call*, literally, *I shall call*, implying a sorrowful conviction that his cries will still be vain. *Thou wilt not hear or answer*: the original expression is a verb specifically appropriated to the favourable reception of a prayer. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4.) *Day and night*, i. e. without intermission. See above, on Ps. i. 2. *No silence* implies *no answer*, and the parallelism is therefore an exact one.

4 (3.) *And thou (art) holy, inhabiting the praises of Israel.* Here begins his statement of the grounds on which he might claim to be heard, and all which may be summed up in this, that *Jehovah* was the covenant God of Israel. The word translated *holy*, in its widest sense, includes all that distinguishes God from creatures, not excepting what are usually termed his natural perfections. Hence the epithet is often found connected with descriptions of his power, eternity, &c. See Isai. vi. 3. xl. 25, 26. lvii. 15. Hab. iii. 3. Ps. cxi. 9. The

primary meaning of the verb appears to be that of *separation*, which may here be alluded to, in reference to Jehovah's peculiar relation to the chosen people. Or it may be taken in its wider and higher sense, leaving the other to be expressed in the last clause. 'Thou art the glorious and perfect God who inhabitest the praises of Israel,' i. e. dwellest among those praises, and art constantly surrounded by them. Some prefer, however, to retain the primary meaning of the Hebrew verb, *sitting* (*enthroned upon*) *the praises of Israel*.

5 (4.) *In thee trusted our fathers; they trusted and thou savedst them.* Not only was Jehovah the covenant God of Israel, and as such bound to help his people, but he had actually helped them in time past. This is urged as a reason why he should not refuse to help the sufferer in this case. The plural form, *our fathers*, makes the prayer appropriate to the whole church, without rendering it less so to the case of Christ, or to that of the individual believer.

6 (5.) *To thee they cried and were delivered; in thee they trusted, and were not ashamed.* This last word is continually used in Scripture for the disappointment and frustration of the hopes. The argument of this verse lies in the tacit contrast between the case referred to and that of the sufferer himself. As if he had said: 'how is it then that I cry and am not delivered, I trust and am confounded or ashamed?'

7 (6.) *And I (am) a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised of the people.* The pronoun expressed at the beginning is emphatic. *I*, as contrasted with my fathers. Our idiom would here require an adversative particle, *but I*, the use of which is much less frequent in Hebrew. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. The insignificance and meanness of mankind in general are elsewhere denoted by the figure of a worm. (Job xxv. 6)

But even in comparison with these, the sufferer is a worm, i. e. an object of contemptuous pity, because apparently forsaken of God, and reduced to a desperate extremity. (Compare Isai. xli. 14. and 1 Sam. xxiv. 15.) *A reproach of mankind*, despised by them, and disgraceful to them.—*The people*, not a single person or a few, but the community at large.

8 (7.) *All seeing me mock at me; they pout with the lip; they shake the head.* This is an amplification of the last clause of the verse preceding. The verb in the second member of the sentence is of doubtful meaning. It may either mean to stretch the mouth, or to part the lips with a derisive grin. (See Ps. xxxv. 21. Job xvi. 10.) The shaking of the head may be either a vague gesture of contempt, or the usual expression of negation, by a lateral or horizontal motion, equivalent to saying 'No, no!' i. e. there is no hope for him. Either of these explanations is more probable than that which applies the words to a vertical movement of the head or nodding, in token of assent, and acquiescence in the sufferings of the sufferer, as just and right. The peculiar gesture here described is expressly attributed by the evangelists to the spectators of our Saviour's crucifixion. (Matth. xxvii. 39. Mark xv. 29.) It is one of those minor coincidences, which, although they do not constitute the main subject of the prophecy, draw attention to it, and help us to identify it.

9 (8.) *Trust in Jehovah! He will deliver him, he will save him, for he delights in him.* The literal meaning of the first clause is: *roll to (or on) Jehovah*, which would be unintelligible but for the parallel expressions in Ps. xxxvii. 5, *roll thy way upon Jehovah*, and in Prov. xvi. 3, *roll thy work upon Jehovah*, where the idea is evidently that of a burden cast upon another by one who is unable to sustain it himself. This burden, in the first case, is his *way*, i. e. his course of life, his

fortune, his destiny, and in the other case, his *work* i. e. his business, his affairs, his interest. In evident allusion to these places, the Apostle Peter says, *casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* (1 Pet. v. 7.) By these three parallels light is thrown on the elliptical expression now before us, *roll, i. e. thy burden or thy care, upon Jehovah.*—A further difficulty is occasioned by the form of the original, which, according to usage, must be either the infinitive construct or the second person of the imperative. But as these seem out of place in such a context, some arbitrarily explain it as an absolute infinitive, or a third person imperative, or change the form to that of a preterite. This last is the construction in the Septuagint version, retained in the New Testament (Matth. xxvii. 43,) and really included in the Hebrew, but by no means an exact representation of its form. Perhaps the best solution of the syntax is to make this clause a quotation or derisive repetition of the sufferer's own words, as if they had said: 'this is he who was so fond of repeating the precept, Trust in Jehovah! Let him now try its virtue in his own case. He, in whom he has trusted and exhorted others to trust also, will no doubt deliver him.' The next two verbs are ironical futures, not imperatives, and should be so translated.—The last words of the verse (וְהָפֵץ בּוֹ) are always applied elsewhere to God's complacency in man, and not to man's reciprocal delight in God. The Septuagint version, retained in the New Testament, *if he will (have) him*, or *if he will (deliver) him*, although not incorrect, is much inferior in strength to the original.—By appropriating these words, the spectators of our Lord's sufferings identified themselves with the wicked persecutors, by whom they are here supposed to be originally uttered.

10 (9.) *For thou didst draw me from the womb, making me trust upon the breasts of my mother.* The argument from past time is here pushed still further. God had not only shown



himself to be the God of the sufferer's forefathers, but of the sufferer himself in early life. The *for* connects this verse with the last clause of the one preceding. What his enemies ironically said was seriously true. God had indeed delighted in him once, for it was he that brought him into life, and through the perils of infancy. *Thou didst draw me*, literally, *thou (art or wast) my breaking forth*, i. e. the cause of it, as God is said to be the light, joy, strength of the believer, i. e. the source or the dispenser of these blessings.—*Made me trust*, does not refer to the literal exercise of confidence in God, which could not be asserted of a suckling, but means *gave me cause to trust* or feel secure, in other words, secured me, kept me safe. The original construction is, *making me trust*, but the Hebrew infinitive and participle used in these two clauses may be here represented by the past tense of the English verb.—As applied to the whole church or chosen people, this verse may be considered as descriptive of God's dealings with them at the exodus from Egypt, which is elsewhere metaphorically represented as a birth. The direct and obvious reference, however, is to individual birth and infancy.

11 (10.) *Upon thee was I cast from the womb; from the bowels of my mother, my God (art) thou.* Into thy arms I was at first received, as into those of an affectionate parent. See Ruth iv. 16, and compare the opposite use of the same figure in Ezek. xvi. 5.—In the last clause we are brought back to the point from which we set out, the sufferer having, in the mean time, as it were, established his right to say, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

12 (11.) *Be not far from me, for distress is near, for there is no helper.* Having shown that he was justified in expecting that God would not forsake him in extremity, he now shows that the extremity exists. The first clause constitutes the link

of connexion between the first and second subdivisions of the psalm. 'Since then thou art my God, and as such must be near in my distress, oh be not far from me now, for my distress is near, and there is no one else to help me.'—*Near* is not put in opposition to proximity or actual contact, but to distance. The particular form of expression was suggested by the prayer in the first clause. It was no time for God to be afar off, when trouble was so near, so close upon the sufferer.—The second *for* may be subordinated to the first, and introduce a reason for declaring that distress was near. But it is much more natural to make the two correlative, and understand the second as suggesting an additional reason for the prayer, *be not far from me*.

13 (12.) *Many bulls have compassed me, strong bulls of Bashan have surrounded me.* He now proceeds to amplify the last clause of the foregoing verse, by showing that trouble was indeed at hand. The strength and fierceness of his persecutors are expressed by comparing them to cattle fed in the rich and solitary pastures of Bashan, where the absence of men would of course increase their wildness. Corresponding to the noun in the first clause is an epithet frequently applied to it in Hebrew.

14 (13.) *They have opened upon me their mouth, a lion tearing and roaring.* The tropical nature of the language is evinced by the entire change of figure in this verse. The same persons who before were bulls of Bashan now appear as a ravening and roaring lion. There is no need of supplying a particle of comparison, the absence of which, in both these verses, by substituting metaphor for simile, adds greatly to the life of the description.

15 (14.) *Like water I am poured out, and all my bones are parted; my heart has become like wax, melted in the midst of*

*my bowels.* Similar terms are used in Josh. vii. 5. Lam. ii. 19, to describe dismay and fear; but in the case before us they seem rather descriptive of extreme weakness. See Ps. lviii. 8 (7). 2 Sam. xiv. 14, and compare the symbolical action in 1 Sam. vii. 6. The comparison with water is applied to moral weakness also in Gen. xlix. 4. The parting of the bones may either denote dislocation or extreme emaciation making the bones prominent. In either case the essential idea is still that of desperate exhaustion and debility.

16 (15.) *Dried like the potsherd (is) my strength, and my tongue fastened to my jaws, and to the dust of death thou wilt reduce me.* The description of debility is still continued. He is as destitute of vigour as a broken piece of earthenware is of sap or moisture.—*Fastened*, literally, made to cleave or stick, through dryness.—*The dust of death*, i. e. the grave, the place of burial, or more generally, the debased, humiliated state of the dead.—*Thou wilt place me in it, or reduce me to it.* The translation of this future as a preterite is not only ungrammatical but hurtful to the sense, as the idea evidently is, that this is something not experienced already, but the end to which his sufferings are tending. The direct address to God recognises him as the sovereign disposer, and men only as his instruments.

17. (16.) *For dogs have surrounded me, a crowd of evil-doers have beset me, piercing my hands and my feet.* He now resumes the description of his persecutors under figures borrowed from the animal kingdom. The comparison with dogs is much less forcible to us than to an oriental reader, because dogs in the east are less domesticated, more gregarious, wilder, and objects not of affection but abhorrence, as peculiarly unclean. In the next clause the figurative dress is thrown aside, and the dogs described as *an assembly of malefactors*. The first noun seems intended to suggest the idea of a whole community or organized

body as engaged in the persecution. See above, on *people* in v 7 (6.) This makes the passage specially appropriate to the sufferings of our Saviour, at the hands both of the mob and of the government. The Hebrew word is one of those applied in the Old Testament to the whole congregation of Israel. (See above, on Ps. i. 5, and compare Ex. xii. 3. xvi. 1, 2, 9. Num. xxvii. 17. Lev. iv. 15.) The last clause, as above translated, contains a striking reference to our Saviour's crucifixion, which some have striven to expunge, by denying that the ancients nailed the feet as well as the hands to the cross. But although there is a singular absence of explicit declaration on the subject, both in the classical and sacred writers, the old opinion that the feet were pierced may be considered as completely verified by modern investigation and discussion. So far, therefore, as the question of usage is concerned, we can have no difficulty in referring this clause to our Saviour's crucifixion, and regarding it as one of those remarkable coincidences, some of which have been already noticed, all designed and actually tending to identify our Lord as the most prominent subject of the prophecy. It is very remarkable, however, that no citation or application of the clause occurs in any of the gospels. It is also worthy of remark that the clause, thus explained, although highly appropriate to one part of our Saviour's passion, is, unlike the rest of the description, hardly applicable, even in a figurative sense, to the case of any other sufferer. Even supposing the essential idea to be merely that of wounds inflicted on the body, it seems strange that it should be expressed in the specific and unusual form of piercing the hands and the feet. On further inspection it appears that, in order to obtain this meaning, we must either change the text (פָּאָרִי or פָּאָרִי for פָּאָרִי) or assume a plural form so rare that some grammarians deny its existence altogether (פָּאָרִי for פָּאָרִים), and an equally rare form of the participle (פָּרִים for פָּאָרִים), and a meaning of the verb itself which no where else occurs, but must be borrowed from a cognate

root (כָּרַח for כָּרַח); an accumulation of grammatical and lexicographical anomalies, which cannot be assumed without the strongest exegetical necessity, and this can exist only if the words admit of no other explanation more in accordance with analogy and usage. Now the very same form in Isai. xxxviii. 13, is unquestionably used to mean *like the lion*, and a slight modification of the same, in Num. xxiv. 9. Ezek. xxii. 25, *like a lion*. This idea would be here the more appropriate because the psalm abounds in such allusions, and because the lion is expressly mentioned both before and afterwards. See above, v. 14 (13), and below, v. 22 (21.) The sense would then be: 'they surround my hands and my feet, as they would a lion,' or, 'as a lion would,' i. e. with the strength and fierceness of a lion. The hands and feet may be mentioned as the parts used in defence and flight. That the mention of these parts, after all, in connexion with the lion is not altogether natural, cannot fairly be denied, and this objection should have all the weight to which it is entitled. But whether it can outweigh the grammatical difficulties that attend the other construction, is a serious question, which ought not to be embarrassed by any supposed conflict with New Testament authority, since no citation of the clause occurs there. It may even be possible to reconcile the two interpretations by supplying a verb and giving כָּרַח its usual meaning. 'Like the lion (they have wounded) my hands and my feet.' The point of comparison would then be the infliction of sharp wounds in those parts of the body, an idea common to the habits of the lion and to the usages of crucifixion.

13 (17.) *I tell all my bones (while) they look and stare upon me.* The pronoun of the last clause is expressed in Hebrew, which removes the ambiguity of the construction, by showing that the subject of the following verbs is not the *bones* of the preceding clause, but something more remote, namely, the sufferer's

enemies and persecutors. The ambiguity of the English word *tell* corresponds to that of the Hebrew (אָסַפֵּר), which means both to number and to relate, to count and to recount. Some suppose, not improbably, that this verse presents the sufferer as stripped by his enemies, and looking with grief and wonder at his own emaciation, while they gaze at it with delight, as the Hebrew phrase implies. See below, on Ps. xxvii. 13.

19 (18.) *They (are about to) divide my garments for themselves, and on my clothing they (are ready to) cast lots.* This is the last stroke necessary to complete the picture. Having stripped him, nothing more is left but to appropriate his garments, whether from cupidity or in derision. The futures intimate that things can go no further without actual loss of life, and that the case is therefore an extreme one. The providential realization of this ideal scene in our Lord's history is expressly mentioned by all the four evangelists, (Matth. xxvii. 35. Mark xv. 24. Luke xxiii. 34. John xix. 23, 24.) This makes their silence as to v. 17 (16) the more remarkable.

20 (19.) *And thou, Jehovah, be not far; my strength! to my assistance hasten.* The pronoun in the first clause is emphatic. 'Such is the conduct of my enemies; but as for thee, oh Lord, be not far from me.' The word translated *strength* is used in this place only, and apparently in reference to the name of God with which the psalm begins (יְהוָה) and to the word *hind* (חֲזִירִי) in the title, both which are akin to it in etymology.

21 (20.) *Free from the sword my life (or soul), from the hand of the dog my lonely one (or only one.)* The sword is a general expression for life-destroying agents. See 2 Sam. xi. 24, 25, where it is applied to archery.—*My life, my soul*, i. e. myself considered as a living person.—The apparent solecism, *hand of the dog*, shows that both terms are figurative or as



one has quaintly expressed it, that the dog meant is a dog with hands. See above, on v. 17 (16), where the plural *dogs* is co-extensive in its meaning with the ideal or collective singular in this place.—*My only (life)*, the only one I have to lose, is a good sense in itself, both here and in Ps. xxxv. 17; but the analogy of Ps. xxv. 16 and lxxviii. 7 (6) recommends the sense of *solitary, lonely*, which is admissible in all the places.

22 (21.) *Save me from the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of the unicorns thou hast heard (or answered) me.* The petition in the first clause is directly followed by an expression of confident assurance that his prayer will be answered, or rather that it is already heard, corresponding to the figurative expression in v. 3 (2), *thou wilt not hear (or answer)*, where the same Hebrew verb is used.—*From the horns* denotes of course the place from which the prayer proceeded, not the answer. The figure is a strong one for the midst of danger. The name of any wild horned animal would be appropriate. The precise sense of the Hebrew word (אֵיִם) is therefore comparatively unimportant. The common version *unicorns* rests on the authority of the Septuagint; but although the unicorn, long regarded as a fabulous animal, has now been proved to be a real one, we have no reason to believe that it was ever known in Palestine, or to dissent from the common judgment of the learned, that the Hebrew word denotes the wild bull or a species of the antelope, most probably the former.

23 (22.) *I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will praise thee.* His certainty of audience and acceptance is further expressed by declaring his intention to give thanks for it.—To declare God's name, in Scripture usage, is to celebrate the acts by which he has manifested his perfections. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11).—*The assembly* or congregation of Israel, to which the Hebrew word is con-

stantly applied. (Lev. xvi. 17. Deut. xxxi. 30), whether present in person or by their representatives (2 Chr. xx. 13—15.) The same sense of the word occurs below, Ps. xxxv. 18. xl. 10 (9.) The idea here is that his praise shall not be merely private or domestic but public.

24 (23.) *Fearers of Jehovah, praise him! All the seed of Jacob, glorify him! And be afraid of him, all the seed of Israel!* These words are uttered, as it were, in the midst of the ideal congregation mentioned in the verse preceding. That the call, though formally addressed to the whole race, was really intended for the spiritual Israel, excluding wicked Israelites and including the righteous of whatever name or nation, is indicated by the words of the first clause, while the last shows that the praise required is not familiar, but in the highest degree reverential.

25 (24.) *For he has not despised and not abhorred the suffering of the sufferer, and has not hid his face from him, and, in his crying to him, heard.* This is the ground on which the fearers of the Lord are called upon to praise him, namely, the faithful execution of his promise to the sufferer in this case, and the pledge thereby afforded of like faithfulness in every other.

26 (25.) *From thee (shall be) my praise in (the) great congregation; my vows I will pay before his fearers,* those who fear him. *From thee* is something more than of thee. It does not merely indicate the theme or subject, but the source or cause of his thanksgiving, 'It is thou who givest me occasion thus to praise thee.' In the last clause there seems to be a reference to the sacrificial feasts connected with the fulfilment of vows made in distress or danger. (See Deut. xii. 18, xvi. 11.) These were occasions of festivity, not only to the offerer

and his nearest friends, but to a wide circle of invited guests, which makes the metaphor peculiarly appropriate in this place. The essential idea is the same as in v. 23 (22.)—*His fearers*, worshippers, the true Israel, as distinguished from the mere natural descendants of the patriarch.

27 (26.) (Then) *shall eat (thereof) the humble and be satisfied*; (then) *shall praise Jehovah those who seek him. May your heart live forever!* The adverb *then* is here supplied in the translation, in order to retain the Hebrew order of the sentence. The word *thereof* is introduced to remove all ambiguity of syntax, and to connect the act of eating with the sacrificial feast of the foregoing verse.—*To seek God*, in the dialect of Scripture, is to seek to know him, and also to seek his favour, not only by specific acts of prayer, but by the whole course of the life. See above, on Ps. xiv. 2.—The concluding wish, *your heart live forever*, comprehends an assurance that it shall live. The heart is said to die, in cases of extreme grief and distress. See 1 Sam. xxv. 37, and compare Ps. cix. 22. The objects of address are those who seek and praise God. The sudden change of person is analogous to that in v. 26 (25), which begins *from thee*, and ends with *fearing him*. That this is not an inadvertent irregularity, appears from its recurrence in the next verse.—The *humble* and the *seekers of Jehovah* are parallel descriptions of the same class, namely, true believers, those who are elsewhere called *the righteous*.

28 (27.) *Remember and return to Jehovah shall all the ends of the earth, and worship before thee all the kindreds of the nations.* As the joyful effects of this deliverance were not to be restricted to himself or his domestic circle, but extended to the *great congregation* of God's people, so too we now read that they shall not be confined to any one race, but made to em-

brace all. *The ends of the earth*, here put for the remotest nations. See above, on Ps. ii. 8. These are named as the least likely to be comprehended in the promise, but of course without excluding those less distant. As if he had said, the ends of the earth and all that is between them. In the other clause, accordingly, we find as a parallel expression, not the furthest but all nations. *They shall remember* this deliverance, this exhibition of God's faithfulness and might, and *shall turn unto Jehovah*, be converted to his worship and his service. Some suppose an allusion to the great original apostacy, or to the temporary casting off of the Gentiles: *they shall remember* their original condition, *and return unto the Lord*, from whom they have revolted. But this, though true and really implied, is not the strict sense of the words, which would then have no perceptible connexion with the general subject of the psalm, and the immediate occasion of the praise which it contains.—*Worship*, literally *prostrate themselves*, the accustomed oriental indication both of civil and religious worship.—The form of expression in the last clause is evidently borrowed from the patriarchal promise. Compare Gen. xii. 3. xxviii. 14.

29 (28.) *For unto Jehovah is the kingdom, and (he is) governor among the nations*. This will not be a gratuitous extension to the Gentiles of what properly belongs to Israel alone, but a restoration of God's mercies, after ages of restriction, to their original and proper scope. *For* Jehovah is not the king of Israel only, but of all mankind. See Rom. iii. 29.—*The kingdom*, i. e. general ecumenical dominion.—*Governor*, properly a participle, *ruling*, the use of which may be intended to suggest that as he has always been their governor *de jure*, so now he begins to govern them *de facto*, not with a providential sway, which is invariable as well as universal, but with a spiritual sway, which is hereafter to be coextensive with the earth itself. Compare the similar expressions, Obad. 21. Zech

xiv. 9, and the still closer parallels, Ps. xcvi. 10. xcvi. 1. xcix. 1.

30 (29.) *They have eaten and worshipped—all the fat (ones) of the earth—before him shall bend all going down (to) the dust, and (he who) his own soul did not save alive.* The distinction of ranks shall be as little regarded at this feast as that of nations.—*Eaten and worshipped*, partaken of the sacrificial feast in honour of this great salvation. *Fat*, a common oriental figure for the prosperous and especially the rich. These are particularly mentioned to exhibit a peculiar feature of the feast in question, which was not, like the sacrificial feasts of the Mosaic law, designed expressly for the poor, though these are not excluded, as appears from the parallel clause.—*Going down to the dust*, i. e. the dust of death, as in v. 16 (15) above. Compare the analogous expressions used in Ps. xxviii. 1. 4, 10. (3, 9,) lxxxviii. 5 (4.) cxv. 17. cxliii. 7. The idea is, that this enjoyment shall be common to the rich and those who are ready to perish, or as it is expressed in the last clause, *he who cannot keep his soul (or himself) alive*, a strong expression for the extreme of destitution. He who before, or a little while ago, no longer kept himself alive but was just about to perish, is now seen kneeling at the sacrificial feast in honour of this great salvation.

31 (30.) *Posterity shall serve him; it shall be related of the Lord to the (next) generation.* The last restriction to be done away is that of time. The effects of this salvation shall no more be confined to the present generation than to the higher classes of society or the natural descendants of the patriarchs.—*A seed*, i. e. posterity, the seed of those who witness or first hear of the event.—*Shall serve him*, i. e. worship and obey Jehovah, the same thing that is expressed by eating and bowing down in v. 30 (29) above. The means of this conversion shall be the perpetuated

knowledge of what God has done.—*Generation* is used absolutely, as in Ps. xxi. 18, where it means not *this generation* but the next. The complete phrase (דֹר אֶחָד) occurs below, Ps. xlviii. 14 (13). lxxviii. 4. *The Lord*. The original is not *Jehovah* but *Adhonai*, the divine name properly denoting sovereignty. See above, on Ps. ii. 4. xxi. 2. The exposition above given of the verse before us is equally agreeable to usage, and much better suited to the context, than the one which makes it mean that *a seed shall be reckoned by the Lord* (as belonging) *to the generation*, i. e. to the generation of his people. (See below, on Ps. xxiv. 6.) It is highly improbable that the passive verb (יִרְכָּץ) has a meaning wholly different from that of the corresponding active form (אֶסְכֶּךָ) in v. 23 (22) above.

32 (31.) *They shall come and shall declare his righteousness to a people born, that he hath done (it)*. The subjects of the first verbs are the *seed* and *generation* of the preceding verse. *They shall come* into existence, shall appear upon the scene. But even they shall not monopolize the knowledge thus imparted, but communicate it to a people now unborn, but then born, i. e. to their own successors. The construction of the participle as a future is unnecessary, although not unauthorized by usage. See above, on Ps. xviii. 4 (3.) Compare with this verse the beautiful figures of Ps. xix. 3 (2).—*His righteousness*, including the faithful execution of his gracious promise. The last clause gives the substance of the declaration to be made, to wit, that *he has done* what forms the subject of the whole psalm. A similar ellipsis of the object, where the context readily supplies it, may be found above in vs. 27, 28, 30 (26, 27, 29.) To these words it is supposed by some that our Lord alluded, in his dying exclamation, IT IS FINISHED! (John xix. 30.) The allusion, though not obvious, is interesting, as it brings the beginning and the end of this remarkable psalm into connexion with each other and with that affecting scene, to which there are so many clear



and pointed references in the whole composition; thus completing, as it were, the proof, already strong enough, that Christ is the great subject of the psalm, as being the great type and representative of that whole class, to whom it ostensibly relates, but of whom some parts, and especially the last five verses, are true only in a modified and lower sense.

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## PSALM XXIII.

AN exquisite description of God's care over his people under the figure of a shepherd and his flock, no doubt suggested by the writer's recollections of his own pastoral experience, although probably composed at a much later period of his life. The idea of the whole psalm is contained in v. 1, carried out and amplified in vs. 2—5, and again summed up, without continuing the metaphor, in v. 6. The psalm is so constructed as at the same time to express the feelings of the Psalmist, and to serve as a vehicle for those of every individual believer and of the whole body of God's people for whose use it was intended.

1. *A Psalm of David. Jehovah (is) my shepherd, I shall not want.* This is the general theme or idea of the whole psalm, that the believer's relation to Jehovah carries with it necessarily the full supply of all his wants. Spiritual gifts are neither excluded nor exclusively intended. No nice distinction between these and temporal advantages is here made for us, and none need be made by us. The comparison of God's care to that of a shepherd is first used by Jacob, (Gen. xlviii. 15. xlix. 24), then by Moses (Deut. xxxii. 6—12), compared with Ps. lxxviii. 52,) both of whom, like David, had

themselves lived a pastoral life. From these the figure is frequently borrowed by the later writers of the Old Testament. See Isai. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 12. Mic. vii. 14. Ps. lxxx. 2 (1.) xcv. 7. This endearing relation of Jehovah to his people was exercised under the old dispensation by the agency of human or angelic messengers, but under the new by Christ, of whom these were only types and representatives, (Zech. xiii. 7), and to whom the figure is expressly applied by himself, (John x. 11) and his apostles (1 Pet. ii. 25. v. 4. Heb. xiii. 20.) From him again, on the principle of delegated representation, is derived the pastoral character of Christian ministers. (Eph. iv. 11.) The future form, *I shall not want*, includes the present, *I do not want*, with an additional assurance that the provision will be still continued. The form of expression is derived from Deut. ii. 7. viii. 9, and recurs below, Ps. xxxiv. 11 (10.)

2. *In pastures of verdure he will make me lie down; by waters of rest (or repose) he will lead me.* Here begins the amplification of the general proposition in the foregoing verse. The first specification is, that he shall not want healthful and delightful rest. This is expressed by figures borrowed from the exquisite enjoyment of a flock in verdant and well-watered pastures. The allusion, in the first clause, is not to the supply of food, which is mentioned afterwards in v. 5, but to the refreshing rest and coolness of green meadows. The first noun properly means *dwelling*s, but is applied specifically to the dwellings of flocks, i. e. their pasture-grounds. See below, Ps. lxxv. 13 (12), and compare Amos i. 2, Jer. ix. 9 (10.) xxv. 37. The next word in Hebrew means the fresh tender grass, here referred to, not as food, but in allusion to its cooling effect upon the eye and the skin. This explanation is confirmed by the fact, that the act expressed by the verb is not that of eating but of lying down. The verb itself is one which specially denotes the lying down of animals (Gen. xxix. 2, Num. xxii. 27. Isai. xi

6), but is sometimes transferred to the human subject (Isai. xiv. 30, Job xi. 19) or to other objects (Gen. xlix. 25, Deut. 29, 19.) *By waters*, not simply *to* them, but *along* them, which is one of the senses of the Hebrew preposition, and affords a much more pleasing image. *By waters of rest* we are not to understand *still* or *quiet waters*, a sense which the Hebrew word has nowhere else, and which would here suggest the idea of stagnation, or at least that of silence, which is far less agreeable than that of an audible flow. The idea really conveyed is that of waters, by or at which rest may be enjoyed. The repose is not that of the waters themselves, but of the flocks reclining near them. The last verb sometimes means to nourish, or more generally to provide for (Gen. xlvii. 17, 2 Chron. xxxii. 22), and the Septuagint version so explains it here. The idea would then be that the shepherd *takes care* of his flock, or *tends* it, by the waters of repose. But a more specific act is described, and therefore a more vivid image presented, by retaining the common version, *leadeth*, which is fully sustained by the use of the same Hebrew verb in Ex. xv. 13, 2 Chron. xxviii. 15. The form, however, should be future, as in the preceding verse.

3. *My soul he will restore; he will lead me in paths of right* (or *rectitude*) *for his name's sake*. To restore the soul, here as in Ps. xix. 8 (7), is to vivify or quicken the exhausted spirit. *Paths of right* may either mean *right paths*, as opposed to those which are devious and dangerous, or *paths of righteousness*, not man's but God's, not ways of upright conduct on the Psalmist's part, but ways of faithfulness on God's part. The righteousness of God, so often appealed to by the ancient saints, includes his covenanted mercy, the exercise of which, according to his promise, was ensured by his essential rectitude. *For his name's sake*, not merely *for his own sake*, nor *for his own glory*, but for the sake of what he has already done, the previous display of his perfections, which would be

dishonoured by a failure to fulfill his promises. See above, on Ps. xxii. 23 (22.)

4. *Also when I walk into (or through) the valley of death-shade, I will not fear evil, for thou (wilt be) with me; thy rod and thy staff, they will comfort me.* He is sure, not only of repose, restoration, and guidance, but of protection. The *also* shows that something new is to be added; not only this which I have said, but more. The common version (*yea, though I walk*) is too indefinite and hypothetical. The situation is not spoken of as possible, but certain, though still future.—*Death-shade* is a strong poetical expression for the profoundest darkness. See below, Ps. xliv. 20 (19.) The common version, *shadow of death*, conveys more than the original, and fails to reproduce its compound form. The effect is heightened by the mention of a valley, as a deep place, often overhung with woods, and naturally darker than a plain or mountain. There may be some allusion to the dread of darkness on the part of sheep and other timid animals.—The rod and the staff are mentioned, not as weapons of defence, but as badges of the shepherd and as tokens of his presence.

5. *Thou wilt spread before me a table in the presence of my adversaries; thou hast anointed with oil my head; my cup (is) overflowing.* To the negative benefits before enumerated he now adds the positive advantage of abundant sustenance. Instead of retaining the image of a sheep and its pasture, the Psalmist substitutes that of a table furnished for a human guest. The connexion, however, is so close and the metaphors so near akin, that the general impression remains undisturbed.—*In the presence of my enemies* implies *in spite of them*; they are forced to witness my enjoyment without being able to disturb it.—*Anointed*, literally *fattened*, in allusion to the richness and abundance of the unction. This was a familiar part of an

ancient festival entertainment, and is therefore frequently employed in Scripture as a symbol of joy. See below, on Ps. xlv. 8 (7).—*My cup*, my beverage, which, with food, makes up the supply of necessary nutriment, but with the additional suggestion of exhilaration. See above, on Ps. xvi. 5.—*Overflowing*, literally *overflow*, or abundant drink. The change of tense is significant and expressive. What he had just before confidently foreseen, he now describes as actually realized.

6. *Only goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah to length of days.* The specifications of the four preceding verses are followed by another summary expression of the general idea propounded in the first verse, but with a change of form. The Hebrew particle at the beginning has its usual and proper sense of *only* or exclusively. The favour which he shall experience is so great that he regards it as unmixed, or the exceptions as unworthy of consideration.—The word translated *goodness* may be understood to mean good fortune, good experienced, as a cognate form does in Ps. xvi. 2; but the other version agrees better with the parallel expression, *mercy*. The verb to *follow* or *pursue* seems to be chosen in allusion to the persecution of his enemies, and as a strong expression for an unbroken series or succession of divine benefactions. Dwelling in the house of Jehovah does not mean frequenting his sanctuary, but being a member of his household and an inmate of his family, enjoying his protection, holding communion with him, and subsisting on his bounty. See above, on Ps. xv. 1.

## PSALM XXIV.

THIS psalm consists of two distinct and, it may seem at first sight, unconnected parts. The first praises God as the universal sovereign by right of creation, vs. 1, 2, and describes the moral requisites to intimate communion with him, vs. 3—6. The second represents him, in a striking figurative form, as entering some place provided for his residence, vs. 7—10. The idea common to both parts is the supremacy of God, both in holiness and majesty. There is no historical occasion to which such a composition would seem more appropriate than the removal of the ark to Mount Zion by David, as described in 2 Sam. vi and 1 Chron. xv. And as the first part of this psalm carries out the idea of dwelling in God's house, expressed at the close of Ps. xxiii, it is not an improbable conjecture, though by no means a necessary supposition, that the two psalms were designed to form a pair and to be sung upon the same occasion; the first, it may be, as the ark left its former resting-place, the second as it drew near to its new one. The resemblance of vs. 3—6 to Ps. xv make it not improbable that that psalm also was composed for use on a similar if not the same occasion. The supposition of alternate choirs in the case before us appears to be a useless and gratuitous refinement. The sanctuary of the old economy, both in its permanent and temporary forms, was intended to symbolize the doctrine of God's special presence and residence among his people; and as this was realized in the



advent of Christ, the Psalm before us has a permanent interest and use, and in a certain sense may be described as Messianic.

1. *To David*, i. e. belonging to him as its author. See above, on Ps. iii. 1. iv. 1. v. 1. *A Psalm. To Jehovah* (belongs) *the earth and its fulness, the world and (those) dwelling in it.* Its fulness, that which fills it, its contents. The word translated *world* is a poetical equivalent to *earth*, denoting specially, according to its etymology, the productive portion of the earth, and thus corresponding indirectly to the Greek *οικουμένη* or inhabited earth. This assertion of Jehovah's sovereign propriety is intended to show, that he was not the God of Israel only, but of the whole world, and thereby entitled to be served with reverence and purity, an idea more distinctly brought out afterwards.

2. *For He above the seas has settled it, and above the streams has fixed it.* The pronoun is emphatic; He and no one else. See below, Ps. c. 3. He has made the earth what it is, and is therefore the sovereign, both of it and its inhabitants. The idea is not that of subterraneous waters bearing up the land, but simply that of the habitable earth, raised above the surface of the waters which surround it. The use of the Hebrew preposition (עַל) is the same as in Ps. i. 3. There is obvious allusion to the rescue of the dry land from the universal prevalence of water, as described in the Mosaic cosmogony, Gen. i. 9, 10. The sense of the two verses, taken in connexion, is that since Jehovah is the God who collected the waters and caused the dry land to appear, he is the rightful sovereign of the habitable earth and of those whom it sustains.

3. *Who shall go up into the mountain of Jehovah, and who shall stand in his holy place?* Since he is thus, by right of creation, the universal sovereign, which of his creatures shall

enjoy the happiness and honour of appearing in his presence ! The *hill of the Lord*, or *mountain of Jehovah*, is Mount Zion, henceforth to be hallowed as his earthly dwelling-place. The verb in the last clause does not simply mean to *stand*, but to *stand fast*, to maintain one's ground. See above, on Ps. i. 5. It may therefore be implied, that some who gain a bodily access to the consecrated place shall not be suffered to remain there. It is indeed implied in the whole interrogation that mere bodily presence on Mount Zion might be wholly unconnected with spiritual access to the holy place.

4. *The clean of hands and pure of heart, who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, and has not sworn to fraud (or falsehood.)* This is the answer to the foregoing question, given by the Psalmist himself. There is no more need of supposing two speakers than in the rhetorical interrogations which are so abundant in Demosthenes and other animated writers. All moral purity is here referred to the hands, the tongue, and the heart, as the organs of external action, speech, and feeling. The same distribution may be made in the commandments of the decalogue. The second clause is very obscure. The form of expression is directly borrowed from the third commandment (Ex. xx. 7), where the common version (*take in vain*) is neither intelligible in itself nor an exact copy of the original. The precise construction (נִשְׁבַּח לַשָּׁמַיִם) is found in these two places only; but a cognate one (נִשְׁבַּח אֵל) occurs repeatedly in the sense of setting the heart or the desires on something. (See Deut. xxiv. 15. Prov. xix. 18. Ps. xxv. 1. lxxxvi. 4. cxliii. 8.) The only two plausible interpretations of the former phrase are that which makes נִשְׁבַּח a mere poetical variation of אֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם and that which gives נִשְׁבַּח לַשָּׁמַיִם, in both places, the sense of *carrying to vanity*, i. e. bringing the name of God or the soul of man into connexion with a falsehood, whether this be taken in its strict sense, or as meaning an unlawful or unsatisfying

object of affection. It seems more natural, however, to explain the case before us, not by the single one in which the combination  $\text{לִּי שָׁנָה}$  occurs, but by the many in which the same verb is connected with the same noun although by a different preposition. The meaning of the clause will then be, *who has not set his heart on falsehood*, or on any false and sinful object. That false swearing is particularly mentioned in the last clause cannot prove that it is exclusively intended here, as parallel clauses very seldom say precisely the same thing.—*Sworn to falsehood*, i. e. made a false oath, or *sworn for deceit*, i. e. with a fraudulent design.

5. *He shall carry away a blessing from Jehovah, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.* The first verb ( $\text{שָׁנָה}$ ) seems to have been chosen with some reference to its use in the foregoing verse, but not so as to require us to take it in precisely the same sense. A blessing from Jehovah, not merely from man, with allusion, as some think, to David's blessing the people, 2 Sam. vi. 18.—*Righteousness* may either mean a practical justification, an attestation of his innocence afforded by his experience of God's favour; or the gift of righteousness itself, the highest and most precious of all gifts, and one which always follows upon justification.—*The God of his salvation*, i. e. God his Saviour, or his God who is a Saviour. See above, on Ps. xviii. 47. (46.)

6. *This is the generation seeking him; the seekers of thy face (are) Jacob*, i. e. the true Jacob, the true Israel. *This* refers to the description in v. 6.—*Seeking him* (in the singular) is the reading in the text; the marginal reading is *those seeking him*, which amounts to the same thing. *To seek God* and to *seek his face*, i. e. his countenance or presence, are common phrases for the earnest endeavour to secure his favour, Ps. xxvii. 8. cv. 4. Hos. v. 15. 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Our language does

not furnish equivalents to the two Hebrew verbs employed to express this idea in the verse before us.—The connexion of the last word with the rest of the sentence is obscure. Some make it a vocative: ‘who seek thy face, oh Jacob!’ i. e. who seek the countenance and friendship of God’s people. Or: ‘who seek thy face oh (God of) Jacob! a very harsh ellipsis, which could only be justified by exegetical necessity. The best sense is yielded by the construction first proposed, or by another, which differs from it only in dispensing with a verb and throwing all into one sentence. ‘This is the generation seeking thee, those seeking thy face (oh Jehovah), (the true) Israel.’ The sudden apostrophe to God himself makes the sentence more impressive without making it obscure.—The distinction here made between the nominal and real Israel was peculiarly necessary on occasions which were suited to flatter the national pride of the chosen people, such as that of Jehovah’s solemn entrance into Zion, as the peculiar God of Israel. To correct this abuse of their extraordinary privileges, two great doctrines are here set forth; first, that their God was the God of the whole earth; and secondly, that he was holy and required holiness as a term of admission to his presence. The idea of a true and false Israel reappears in the New Testament, and is propounded with peculiar distinctness and emphasis by Paul in Rom. ix. 6, 7.

7. *Lift up, oh gates, your heads, and be lifted up, ye doors of perpetuity! And in will come the king of glory!* The procession is now commonly supposed to have arrived at the entrance of the citadel or walled town of Zion, the acropolis of Jerusalem. The gates of this acropolis are those personified in this fine apostrophe. They are called *perpetual* or *everlasting* on account of their antiquity, and not in mere anticipation of their subsequent duration, as in 1 Kings viii. 13. They are called upon to raise their heads, that he who is about to enter may not debase himself by stooping to pass through them. The

connexion of the clauses is correctly given, but in a form much more agreeable to the English than the Hebrew idiom, by translating the future as a subjunctive tense, *that the king of glory may come in*. The king of glory is a phrase analogous to *hill of holiness, strength of salvation, &c.*, and means *glorious king*.

8. *Who is this, the king of glory? Jehovah, strong and mighty, Jehovah, mighty in battle (or a mighty warrior.)* The supposition of alternate or responsive choirs is as unnecessary here as in v. 4 above. It is the case, so common in all animated speech and composition, of a speaker asking a question simply for the purpose of answering it himself. As if he had said: 'do you ask who this king of glory is? It is the Lord,' &c. The common version, *who is this king of glory?* does not fully convey the force of the original, the sense of which is, 'who is this (of whom you speak as) the king of glory?' The word translated *mighty*, although properly an adjective, is continually used as a noun substantive, and is the nearest equivalent in Hebrew to the classical term *hero*. But the simple majesty of David's language would be marred in a translation by the use of this word, and still more by that of the combination, *martial* or *military hero*, in the other clause. The idea, both in this and other places, is borrowed from the Song of Moses, Ex. xv. 3.

9. *Lift up, oh gates, your heads, and lift (them) up, ye doors of perpetuity, and in will come the king of glory.* In order to conclude with an emphatic repetition of the epithets in v. 8, it was necessary that the question in that verse should be repeated likewise; and in order to this the summons in v. 7 is repeated here, but, as in most like cases, with a variation, which, though slight, relieves the repetition from entire sameness. The variation here consists in the exchange of the passive

form, *be lifted up*, for the corresponding active, *lift up, so your heads*, the object being readily suggested by the other clause.

10. *Who is this, the king of glory? Jehovah (God) of Hosts, he is the king of glory. Selah.* Between the question here and in v. 8 the only variation is one which cannot well be imitated in translation. For the simple Hebrew phrase (מִי־זֶה) *who (is) this?* we have here the fuller form (מִי הוּא זֶה), in which the personal pronoun is interposed between the interrogative and demonstrative, so as to suggest the two forms, *who is he?* and *who is this?* though really constituting but a single question, as the personal pronoun (הוא), in Hebrew usage, often serves as an index of the substantive verb when not expressed. —There is a more material variation in the answer, where instead of the two phrases, *Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle*, the Psalmist substitutes the single but still more expressive title, *Jehovah Zebaoth* or *of Hosts*. In Exodus xii. 41, Israel is called *the hosts of Jehovah*; but a much more frequent designation is *the host* or *hosts of heaven*, sometimes applied to the heavenly bodies, especially as objects of idolatrous worship (Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. 2 Kings xvii. 16. Isai. xxxiv. 4. Jer. xxxiii. 22. Zeph. i. 5. Dan. viii. 10), and sometimes to the angels (Jos. v. 14, 15. 1 Kings xxii. 19. 2 Chr. xviii. 18. Ps. ciii. 21. cxlviii. 2.) In both these senses God may be described as the God of Hosts, i. e. as the sovereign both of the material heavens and of their inhabitants. From the use of *hosts* in Gen. ii. 1, some would extend it to the earth as well as the heavens, and explain the compound title as denoting *Lord of the Universe*, as Mohammed in the Koran speaks of Allah as the *Lord of Worlds*. But this explanation, even supposing it to be correct as to the single place on which it rests, derives no countenance from usage elsewhere. Still less admissible is that which makes it simply mean the God of



**Battles** or the God of War, a name and an idea much less scriptural than heathenish. The phrase *Jehovah Zebaoth* does not occur in the Pentateuch, Joshua or Judges, from which some have inferred that it was afterwards introduced in opposition to the worship of the heavenly bodies, and of the spirits which were supposed to govern and inhabit them. According to the usage of the Hebrew language, *Jehovah*, as a proper name, cannot be construed with a genitive directly, nor is it ever so connected with any other noun. The anomaly can only be removed by making *Zebaoth* itself a proper name, or by supplying the word *God* between it and *Jehovah*. The first solution may appear to be favoured by the  $\sigma\upsilon\beta\alpha\omega\theta$  of the Septuagint, retained in Rom. ix. 29 and James v. 4. But the other is proved to be the true one by such passages as Hos. xii. 6 (5.) Am. iv. 13, where we have the full form, *Jehovah God of Hosts*. Compare Ps. lix. 6 (5.) lxxx. 5 (4.) lxxxiv. 9 (8.)—This description of Jehovah as the God of heaven no less than of earth, while it sensibly strengthens the expressions of v. 8, and thus removes the appearance of a mere tautological reiteration, at the same time brings us back in the conclusion to the point from which we set out in v. 1, to wit, the universal sovereignty of God. The whole psalm is then brought to a solemn and sonorous close by making the answer echo the terms of the interrogation, *He is the king of glory!* These points of difference between vs. 8 and 10 impart a beautiful variety to the repeated sentence, without impairing in the least the rhetorical or musical effect of the repetition itself, which is followed only by the customary indication of a pause, both in the sense and the performance. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2).

## PSALM XXV

THE first of the alphabetical psalms, in which the verses begin with the different Hebrew letters in their order, an arrangement peculiar to those psalms, in which a single theme or idea is repeated under various forms, and, as it were, in a series of aphorisms. Now and then, in order to complete the expression of the thought, the series of the letters is neglected, either by repeating or omitting one. In this psalm for example, two successive verses begin with א, and two with ה, while ו and ק are left out. The first verse, however, does not properly belong to the alphabetical series, but constitutes one sentence with the short verse at the end, which is added after the completion of the alphabet. The theme which runs through this psalm is deliverance from enemies, occasionally blended with a prayer for the divine forgiveness.

1. *By David. Unto thee, Jehovah, my soul will I lift up,* or as some explain it, *bring or carry.* All agree, however, that the essential idea is that of confident desire. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 4. and compare Ps. lxxxvi. 4. cxliii. 8 below, where the phrase occurs again. The sentiment expressed is that of settled confidence in God, to the exclusion of all other helpers.

2. *My God, in thee have I trusted, let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me,* or more exactly, *with*

*respect to me.* As the future verb of the preceding verse implies a fixed determination to confide in God hereafter, so the preterite in this verse indicates that such trust has been exercised already. The present is included under both forms.—*Ashamed*, disappointed, defeated in my plans and expectations. See above, on Ps. xxii. 6 (5).—The last clause shows that suffering from enemies was in the psalmist's mind throughout.

3. *Likewise all (those) waiting for thee shall not be ashamed, ashamed shall be the traitors without cause.* He does not ask for any special dispensation in his own behalf, but merely for a fair participation in God's customary mode of dealing with the whole class of which he is a member, here described as those *waiting for God*, i. e. hoping in him, awaiting the fulfilment of his promises. The modern English sense of *waiting on* is too restricted, though the phrase once exactly corresponded to the Hebrew.—The position of the verbs, at the end and the beginning of successive clauses, gives a peculiar turn to the sentence, which is lost in some translations.—*Without cause* qualifies the word immediately preceding, and describes the enemy not only as perfidious but as acting so gratuitously and without provocation. See above, on Ps. vii. 5 (4), and below, on Ps. xxxv. 19. xxxviii. 20 (19.) lxix. 5 (4.)

4. *Thy ways, Jehovah, make me know; thy paths teach me.* As the ways of God, throughout this psalm, are the same as in Deut. xxxii. 4, namely his dispensations towards his people, the way in which he orders their condition and disposes of their lot, the teaching prayed for must be that of experience. 'Let me know in my own case what it is to be guided and protected and provided for by God himself.' This meaning suits the context better than that of moral guidance, which however is implied, if not expressed.

5. *Make me walk in thy truth and teach me, for thou (art) the God of my salvation; for thee have I waited all the day* The obvious meaning of this verse, interpreted according to New Testament and modern usage, would be that of a prayer for divine instruction in religious truth or doctrine. But the usage of the Psalms, and the preceding context, are in favour of explaining *truth* to mean the veracity of God, or the faithful performance of his promises. See Ps. xxx. 10 (9.) lxxi. 22. xci. 4. The teaching asked is then experimental teaching or the actual experience of God's faithfulness.—*The God of my salvation*, or my Saviour God. See above, on Ps. xviii. 47 (46).—*I have waited*. This is no new or untried exercise of faith, to be attempted for the first time, but one with which I have been long familiar.—*All the day*, continually, always.

6. *Remember thy mercies, oh Jehovah, and thy favours, for from eternity are they.* The prayer for future favours is here founded upon those experienced already.—*Of old* is an inadequate translation of מֵעוֹלָם, and even in the stronger form, *ever of old*, less exact and expressive than the literal translation *from eternity*, to which there is the less objection here, as the words relate not merely to God's acts but to his attributes.

7. *The sins of my youth and my transgressions (oh) remember not; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for the sake of thy goodness, oh Jehovah!* Among the mercies which he craves the most important is the pardon of his sins, not only in itself considered, but as that without which all the others must be worthless. The sins of his youth are mentioned as the earliest in date, and probably as those committed with the least restraint, at an age when reflection is subordinate to passion. Compare Job xiii. 26. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Besides the obvious reference to the youthful sins of individuals, there may be also an allusion to the national iniquities of Israel, committed

in the period of their childhood as a people, namely, that of their sojourn in the wilderness. See below, on v. 22, and compare Deut. ix. 7.

8. *Good and upright (is) Jehovah; therefore will he guide sinners in the way.* Not only the goodness but the rectitude of the divine nature requires the exercise of covenanted mercy. The second epithet is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 4.—The *way* meant in the last clause is the way of safety or salvation. What is meant may be either that God guides sinners *into* it by converting them, or that he guides those sinners *in* it who are still his people, as the same person claims to be both righteous and a sinner in Ps. xli. 5, 13. (4, 12.) Hence perhaps he uses the indefinite term *sinners*, not the distinctive phrase *the sinners*, or the more emphatic epithet *the wicked*.

9. *He will guide humble (sinners) in justice, and teach humble (sinners) his way.* The common version of עֲנָוִים, *meek*, is too restricted and descriptive of mere temper. The Hebrew word is the nearest equivalent to *humble* in its strong religious sense. The omission of the article may be explained as a poetic license, and the word translated *the humble*, so as to include the whole class. But the intimate connexion between this verse and the one before it makes it more natural to take עֲנָוִים as a description of the sinners mentioned in v. 8, who are then of course to be regarded as penitent believing sinners, i. e. as true converts. *In justice*, i. e. in the exercise of justice, as before explained. The *way* and the *teaching* are the same as in the foregoing context, namely, those of Providence.

10. *All the paths of Jehovah (are) mercy and truth to the keepers of his covenant and his testimonies.* The paths of Jehovah are the paths in which he walks himself, in other words, the ways in which he deals with his creatures.—*Truth*

veracity, fidelity. See above, on v. 5. A similar combination occurs, John i. 14. The last clause shows that the preceding promises are limited to those who are in covenant with God.—*Keepers*, observers, those obeying.—*His covenant*, the commands to which his promise is annexed. The same are called *his testimonies* against sin and in behalf of holiness. See above, on Ps. xix. 8 (7.)

11. *For the sake of thy name (wilt thou do this), and wilt pardon my iniquity because it is great.* The form of the verb (וְסָלַחְתָּ) is one that is commonly preceded by a future, which may here be readily supplied, so as to make the first clause refer to the preceding promises.—*For thy name's sake*, for the honour of thy nature and thy attributes as heretofore revealed in act. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 3.—The emphatic pronoun at the end (רַב-הוּא) may possibly refer to the remoter antecedent, as in Ps. xxii. 18 (17). The sense will then be, 'and forgive my iniquity because that name is great.' (Compare Mal. i. 11.) There is nothing ungrammatical, however, in the usual construction, which also agrees better with the usage of the adjective (רַב), as denoting rather quantity than elevation, and with the parallel phrase, *much transgression* (פֶּשַׁע רַב) in Ps. xix. 14 (13.)

12. *Who (is) the man fearing Jehovah? He will guide him in the way he shall choose.* In the first clause the form of the original is highly idiomatic: who (is) this, the man, a fearer of Jehovah? See above, on Ps. xxiv. 8.—The ellipsis of the relative in the last clause is common to both idioms.—*He guides him* and will guide him. There is not only an affirmation but a promise. The *way*, as in the foregoing context, is the providential way in which God directs the course of a man's life. His *choosing* it implies not only sovereign authority, but a gracious regard to the interests of his servant.



13. *His soul in good shall lodge, and his seed shall possess the land.* The parallelism between *soul* and *seed* seems to show that by *his soul* we are to understand *himself*, for which the Hebrew has no appropriate expression. The promise then includes both himself and his posterity. To *lodge*, to be at home, to dwell at ease, and by implication to abide or continue undisturbed.—*In good*, not goodness, but good fortune or prosperity.—The verb translated *shall possess* denotes specifically to *inherit* or possess as an inheritance, i. e. from generation to generation, in perpetual succession.—*The land*, to wit, the land of Canaan; and as this was the standing promise of the law, uttered even in the decalogue (Ex. xx. 12), it became a formula for all the blessings implicitly embraced in the promise of Canaan to the ancient Israel, and is so used even by our Lord himself, (Matth. v. 5.)

14. *The friendship of Jehovah is to (those) fearing him, and his covenant to make them know.* The word translated *friendship* means originally a company of persons sitting together, Ps. cxi. 1; then familiar conversation, Ps. lv. 15 (14); then confidential intercourse, intimacy, friendship, Prov. iii. 32; then a confidence or secret, Prov. xi. 13. The last sense is commonly preferred in the English version, even when one of the others would be more appropriate, as in this case, where the sense of intimacy, friendship, seems required by the context. The last clause is ambiguous and may either mean, his covenant is designed to be known by them, or his covenant is designed to make them know, i. e. his way; or in general, to give them knowledge. *To make them know his covenant* is a forced construction and forbidden by the collocation of the Hebrew words. The meaning of the whole verse seems to be, that Jehovah condescends to hold familiar intercourse with those who fear him, and enters into covenant relation with

them for the purpose of making them know all that they need know for his service or their own advantage.

15. *My eyes (are) always towards Jehovah; for he will bring out from the net my feet.* The first clause expresses settled trust and constant expectation. The figure of a net is a favourite one for dangers arising from the craft and spite of enemies. See above, on Ps. ix. 16 (15,) x. 9.

16. *Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me, for lonely and distressed (am) I.* The prayer to turn implies that his face was before averted, a common figure in the Psalms for the suspension or withholding of God's favour. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.)—The word translated *lonely* is the same that occurs above, Ps. xxii. 21 (20.)

17. *The troubles of my heart have they enlarged; from my distresses do thou bring me out.* The plural of the first clause is indefinite, equivalent to a passive construction in English, *are enlarged*. (Compare the common version of Luke xii. 20.) It does not refer even to his enemies specifically, but to all others, as distinguished from his lonely self, and from his sole deliverer.

18. *See my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.* So long as God leaves him to endure, he is conceived of as not seeing his condition. The prayer that he will see includes the prayer that he will save. The renewed prayer for forgiveness in the last clause seems again to recall to mind the intimate connexion between suffering and sin.

19. *See my enemies, for they are many, and (with) hatred of violence have hated me.* The agency of wicked foes in causing his distresses, which had been referred to in vs. 2, 15, 17, is here again brought into view. The word translated

*violence* is very strong, including the ideas of injustice and cruelty. See above, on Ps. xi. 6 (5.) xviii. 49 (48.)—The past tense represents the enmity as something of long standing.

20. (*Oh*) *keep my soul and deliver me ; let me not be ashamed, for I have trusted in thee.* To *keep* is here to keep in safety, to preserve.—*Ashamed*, confounded, disappointed. See above, on v. 2. The word translated *trusted* is not that employed in v. 2, but the one which occurs in Ps. ii. 12, and which originally means to seek a refuge or a hiding-place. See above, on Ps. xi. 2 (1.)

21. *Integrity and rectitude shall preserve me, because I have waited for thee.* The first word means completeness or perfection (*integritas*), i. e. freedom from essential defect. See above, on Ps. xviii. 21, 24 (20, 23.) Here however it may signify the perfect rectitude of God, which will not suffer him to cast off or forsake those who *wait for him*, i. e. trustfully expect the fulfilment of his promises.

22. *Redeem, oh God, Israel out of all his troubles!* As the psalm was designed, from the first, to be a vehicle of pious feeling and desire for the whole church, it is here wound up with a petition showing this extent of purpose. The Psalmist prays no longer for himself, but for all Israel. The peculiar name *Jehovah*, which had hitherto been used exclusively, is here exchanged for the generic name of *God*, perhaps in opposition to the human adversaries of the Psalmist and his total destitution of all human help. This verse forms no part of the alphabetical series, but begins with the same letter as v. 16. Like the first verse it consists of a single clause, as if the two together were designed to constitute one sentence.

## PSALM XXVI.

AN appeal to God's justice and omniscience, vs. 1—3, enforced by a disavowal of all sympathy and communion with the wicked, vs. 4—6, and a profession of devotion to God's service, vs. 7, 8, with an earnest prayer to be delivered from the death of those whose life he abhors, v. 9, 10, and an expression of strong confidence that God will hear his prayer, vs. 11, 12. There is a certain similarity of form between this psalm and the foregoing, which, together with their collocation in the Psalter, makes it not improbable that they were designed to constitute a pair or double psalm.

1. *By David. Judge me, Jehovah, for I in my integrity have walked, and in Jehovah I have trusted; I shall not swerve* (or *slip*). The correctness of the title is confirmed by the resemblance of the psalm itself to several, the authorship of which is undisputed, more especially Ps. xv, xvii, xviii, xxiv.—*Judge me*, do me justice, vindicate or clear me. See above, on Ps. xvii. 1, 2.—*In my integrity* of purpose and of principle. To this is added its inseparable adjunct, trust in God.—*Walked*, lived, pursued a certain course of conduct. See above, on Ps. i. 1. The last clause is by some explained as the expression of a wish, *let me not be moved*. But there is no reason for departing from the strict sense of the future, as expressing a confident anticipation. *Swerve*, as in Ps. xviii. 37 (36), xxxvii. 31

2. *Try me, Jehovah, and prove me; assay my reins and my heart.* The first verb is supposed by etymologists to signify originally trial by touch, the second by smell, and the third by fire. In usage, however, the second is constantly applied to moral trial or temptation, while the other two are frequently applied to the testing of metals by the touchstone or the furnace. This is indeed the predominant usage of the third verb, which may therefore be represented by the technical metallurgic term, *assay*. See above, on Ps. xvii. 3, where two of the same verbs occur.—*Reins* and *heart* are joined, as seats of the affections. See above, on Ps. vii. 10 (9.)—The prayer of this verse is an appeal to God's omniscience for the psalmist's integrity of purpose, which agrees much better with the context than the explanation of צִרְפוֹת as a participle and of the last clause as an affirmation, *purified* (or *purged*) *are my reins and my heart.*

3. *For thy mercy (is) before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth.* This verse assigns a reason for his confident persuasion that he shall not slide, to wit, because God's mercy is before his eyes, literally, *in front* of them, i. e. constantly in view, as an object of memory and ground of hope. He is also encouraged by his previous experience of God's *truth* or faithfulness. See above, on Ps. xxv. 5. The verb translated *walked* is an intensive form of that used in v. 1 above and v. 11 below. It means properly to walk about or to and fro, and expresses more distinctly than the primitive verb the idea of continuous habitual action. 'My constant experience of thy mercy and thy faithfulness assure me that I shall not fall away hereafter.'

4. *I have not sat with men of falsehood, and with hidden (men) I will not go.* He is further encouraged to believe that he will be sustained because he has not hitherto espoused the cause of those who hate God.—*Men of falsehood*, liars or de-

ceivers, which appears to suit the context better than the wider sense of *vain men*, i. e. destitute of all moral goodness, good for nothing, worthless. See above, on Ps. v. 7 (6) xxiv. 4. The same class of persons are described in the last clause as masked, disguised, or hypocritical.—*Sat*, not merely in their company, but in their councils, taking part in their unlawful machinations. The change of tense is any thing rather than unmeaning. ‘I have not sat with them in time past, and I will not go with them in time to come.’ The form of expression is borrowed from Gen. xlix. 6.

6. *I will wash in innocence my hands, and will compass thy altar, oh Jehovah!* To the negative professions of the two preceding verses he now adds a positive declaration of his purpose. Not content with abstaining from all share in the counsels of the wicked, he is fully resolved to adhere to the service of the Lord. He will cleanse himself from all that would unfit him for that service, and then cleave to the sanctuary where God dwells. The expression in the first clause seems to be copied from Gen. xx. 5, and the symbol or emblem from Deut. xxi. 6. (Compare Matt. xxvii. 24.) Whether *compassing* the altar be explained to mean going round it in procession, or embracing it, the idea expressed is still that of close adherence and devoted attachment.

7. *To make known with a voice of thanksgiving, and to recount all thy wondrous works.* The object of the acts described in the preceding verse was to promote God’s glory. *To make known*, literally *to cause to hear* or *to be heard*. The clause admits of several constructions. 1. To publish thanksgivings with the voice 2. To publish with a thankful voice, without expressing what. 3. To publish and recount all thy wondrous works with a voice of thanksgiving. The last is on the whole entitled to the preference.—The last word in the



verse is a passive participle meaning *wonderfully made or done*. The plural feminine is used indefinitely like the neuter in Greek and Latin, to mean *things done wonderfully*, which is also the idea of the common version, *wondrous works*.

8. *Jehovah, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place of the dwelling of thy glory.* This verse expresses more directly and literally the idea of v. 6 above, and shows that his compassing the altar was intended to denote his love for the earthly residence of God, the altar being there put for the whole sanctuary, which is here distinctly mentioned. *The habitation of thy house* might be understood to mean a residence in it; but the usage of the first noun and the parallelism show that it rather means *the place where thy house dwells*, perhaps in allusion to the migratory movements of the ark and its appendages before the time of David. So too in the last clause, Hebrew usage would admit of the translation, *thy glorious dwelling place*, as in Ps. xx. 7 (6); but the use of פִּיבֹד in the Pentateuch to signify the visible presence of Jehovah (Ex. xxiv. 16. xl. 34, 35) seems decisive in favour of explaining it *the place where thy glory dwells*, i. e. where the glorious God is pleased to manifest his presence.

9. *Take not away my soul with sinners, and with men of blood my life.* The primary meaning of the first verb is to *gather*, as a harvest or as fruit, a figure not unfrequently applied in various languages to death, here described as the taking away of the life or soul. This verse and the next contain a prayer that he may die as he has lived, <sup>and</sup> that since he has had no community of interest or feeling <sup>with</sup> God and ungodly men in life, he may not be united with them <sup>in</sup> death.—*Men of blood*, literally *bloods*, i. e. murderers, either in the strict sense or by metonymy for sinners of the worst class. See above, on Ps. v. 7 (6.) Another idiomatic plural in this sentence is the word

*lives* at the end, which is used as an abstract simply equivalent to *life* in English.

10. *In whose hands is crime, and their right hand is filled with a bribe.* The first clause exhibits the peculiar construction of the relative in Hebrew with the personal pronoun expressed, of which it is the substitute in other languages. *Who* (or *as to whom*)—in *their hands* (is) *crime*. This last word, (זִמְמָה) is a very strong one, used in the Law to denote specifically acts of gross impurity, but signifying really any wicked act or purpose. The common version, *mischiefs*, is too weak. The last word in the verse denotes especially a judicial bribe (Ps. xv. 5), and may be intended to suggest that the whole description has reference to unrighteous <sup>it</sup>ives, or to wicked men in public office.

11. *And I in my integrity will leave to the sinner and be merciful to me.* The use of *leave* to the sinner and emphatic pronoun is the same as in Ps. ii. <sup>1</sup> the first clause would require an adversative conjunction or emblematic position to the sinners just described, *but as* (ii. 24.) Whether *walk as I have done* in sincerity and simplicity going round it is the obvious contrast of the tenses here and <sup>passed</sup> is still that of <sup>show</sup> how seldom they are used prominently.—That the Psalmist's *perfection* or *absolute* nor inherent, is clear from *with a voice of thanksgiving* last clause. He expects still to be perfect *us works*. The <sup>he</sup> is without sin, but because he hopes to <sup>ing</sup> verse was <sup>in</sup> its dominion through the *mercy* of Jehovah <sup>ally to cause to</sup> <sup>eral construc</sup>

12. *My foot stands on a level place; in the assemblies will I bless Jehovah.* As a station of danger and distress might be compared to a precipitous and rugged path, so one of ease and safety is denoted by a smooth or level path.—*My foot* (now)

*stands*, or *has* (at last) *stool*, found a resting place, implying previous wanderings and hardships.—The *assemblies* primarily meant are no doubt the stated congregations at the sanctuary. The determination to praise God implies a strong assurance that the occasion for so doing will be granted. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) The whole verse indeed is an expression of confident belief that God will hear and answer the foregoing prayers, and thus, as in many other psalms, we are brought back at the conclusion to the starting point. Compare the last clause of v. 1.

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## PSALM XXVII.

A SUFFERER, surrounded by enemies intent on his destruction, and deprived of human help, implores divine assistance and expresses his assured hope of obtaining it. The expression of confidence occurs at the beginning and the end, the description of the danger and the prayer for deliverance in the body of the psalm. If God be for him and admit him to his household, he is satisfied and safe, vs. 1—6. With this persuasion he implores that God will interpose for his deliverance from present danger, v. 7—12. If he did not believe that God would grant his request he must despair; but as he does believe it, he encourages himself to wait for it, vs. 13—14. There is no apparent reference to any particular historical occasion, but an obvious intention to provide a vehicle of pious sentiment for all God's people under the form of trial here described.

1. *By David. Jehovah (is) my light and my salvation; of whom shall I be afraid? Jehovah (is) the strong-hold of my life; of whom shall I be in dread?* As darkness is a common figure for distress, and light for relief from it, the same idea is here twice expressed, first in a figurative form as light, and then more literally as *salvation*. These terms are applied to God, by a natural and common figure of speech, as the source or dispenser of light and salvation. Compare Mich. vii. 8. The interrogations imply negation of the strongest kind. The form of expression is imitated in Rom. viii. 31—35.—The noun *מִצְרֵי* is sometimes used as an abstract, *strength*; but its proper meaning, as its very form denotes, is local. The *strong-hold* or *fortress of my life*, that which makes my life as safe as walls and fortifications. The variation of the verbs in the two clauses is merely rhetorical, without any change in the idea.

2. *In the drawing near against me of evil doers, to devour my flesh, (in the drawing near of) my adversaries and my enemies to me, (it is) they (that) have stumbled and fallen.* Even in the most imminent dangers which have hitherto befallen me, the divine protection has enabled me to see those who sought to overwhelm me overwhelmed themselves. *Evil-doers*, not only against me, but in general. It was not because they were his enemies merely, but because they were the enemies of God, that he so easily subdued them.—*To eat my flesh*, a figure borrowed from the habits of wild beasts. Compare Job xix. 22. Ps. xiv. 4. xxxv. 1.—*To me* is to be construed not with *enemies*, but with the verb, as in Job xxxiii. 22. See below, on Ps. lv. 19. The pronoun expressed in the last clause is emphatic: ‘they themselves, not I, as they expected, fell.’

3. *If there encamp against me an encampment. my heart shall not fear; if there arise against me war, (even) in this (case) I (am) confident.* With the sentiment of this verse

compare Ps. iii. 7 (6.) The primary meaning of the noun in the first clause is retained in the translation for the sake of its assonance with the verb, which is lost in the common version, although marked in the original. By *encampment*, however, must be understood the men encamped, the host, the army.—*In this*, even in this extremity. Compare Lev. xxvi. 27. Job i. 22. The common version, *in this will I be confident*, although ambiguous, appears to mean, ‘I will confide in this, i. e. in the fact that Jehovah is my light and my salvation.’ This construction is grammatical and yields a good sense, but the other is more pointed and emphatic, and the absolute use of בֹּטַח in the sense of *safe, secure*, is justified by Judg. xviii. 27. Jer. xii. 5. Prov. xi. 15.

4. *One (thing) have I asked from Jehovah, (and) that will I (still) seek, that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah, to gaze at the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in his temple.* To dwell in the house of the Lord is not merely to frequent his sanctuary as a place of worship, but to be a member of his household, and as such in intimate communion with him. See above, on Ps. xv. 1. xxiii. 6.—*Beauty*, loveliness, desirableness, all that makes God an object of affection and desire to the believer. See below, on Ps. xc. 17. Some take the last verb in the secondary sense of meditating; but the proper one of inquiring is entirely appropriate.—*Temple*, properly palace, the earthly residence of the great King, and therefore equally appropriate to the temple and the tabernacle. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.)

5. *For he will hide me in his covert in the day of evil; he will secrete me in the secrecy of his tent; on a rock he will set me high.* This verse assigns his reason for wishing to be still a member of Jehovah’s household, namely, because there he is sure of effectual protection.—The word translated *covert* means a booth or shelter made of leaves and branches, such as the Jews

used at the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 42.) It is here used as a figure for secure protection *in the day of evil*. i. e. of suffering or danger.—*Secrete* and *secrecy* are used in the translation to represent the cognate verb and noun in Hebrew.—By *his tent*, as appears from the preceding verse, we are to understand the tabernacle, not considered merely as a place of public worship, but as Jehovah's earthly residence, his mansion. In the last clause the idea of protection is conveyed by an entirely different figure, that of a person placed upon a high rock beyond the reach of danger. See above, on Ps. ix. 14 (13.) xviii. 49 (48.)

6. *And now shall my head be high above my enemies around me, and I will sacrifice in his tabernacle sacrifices of joyful noise; I will sing and make music to Jehovah.* And now may either be a formula of logical resumption, as in Ps. ii. 10. xxxix. 8 (7), or be taken in its strict sense, as denoting that he not only hopes for future safety, but is ready in the mean time, *even now*, to thank him publicly for his protection as already realized. The first clause merely amplifies the last of the preceding verse. The next adds the promise of a thank-offering at the tabernacle, which implies an assured hope of deliverance and prosperity. By a *joyful noise* some understand the blowing of trumpets which accompanied certain offerings (Num. x. 10. xxix. 1); but as this is never mentioned in connexion with private sacrifices, it seems more advisable to rest in the general sense of the expression.

7. *Hear, oh Jehovah! (with) my voice I will call, and do thou have mercy on me and answer me.* The psalmist here descends from the tone of confident assurance to that of strong desire, prompted by a sense of urgent need.—*With my voice*, not merely with my mind, but audibly, aloud. See above, on Ps. iii. 5 (4)



8. *To thee hath said my heart—Seek ye my face—thy face, Jehovah, will I seek.* The general meaning of this verse is obvious enough, although its syntax is exceedingly obscure. The best solution is to take “seek ye my face” as a citation of God’s own words. ‘My heart has said to thee—(whenever thou hast said) Seek ye my face,—thy face,’ &c. Or, ‘my heart has said to thee—(in answer to thy words) Seek ye my face—thy face,’ &c.—*My heart hath said*, i. e. I have said with or from the heart. See above, on Ps. xi. 1. There may be an allusion to Deut. iv. 29, from which the expression *seek God* (2 Sam. xii. 16. 2 Chr. xx. 4) and *seek his face* (Ps. xxiv. 6. cv. 4) seems to be derived. The idea is that of seeking admission to his presence for the purpose of asking a favour. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 6.

9. *Hide not thy face from me, put not away in wrath thy servant; my help thou hast been; forsake me not, and leave me not, (oh) God of my salvation!* The first petition is that God will not withhold from him the manifestation of his love or favour. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.)—*Put not away*, or thrust aside, as one unworthy to be noticed.—*Thy servant*, and as such entitled to thy kind regard.—*My help*, i. e. the source and author of my help, my helper.—*Thou hast been*; the past tense is here essential: what thou *hast been*, continue to be still.—*God of my salvation*, my Saviour God, or God my Saviour; see above, on Ps. xviii. 47 (46.)

10. *For my father and my mother have left me, and Jehovah will take me in.* Parents are here put for the nearest friends, whose loss or desertion is frequently complained of in the Psalms as one of the most painful signs of desolation. See Ps. xxxi. 12 (11.) xxxviii. 12 (11.) lxix. 9 (8.) lxxxviii. 9 (8), and compare Job xix. 13. The first clause may also be translated, *when my father and my mother have left me, then the*

*Lord will take me in.*—The last expression is applied to the compassionate reception of strangers or wanderers into one's house. See Josh. xx. 4. Judg. xix. 15, and compare Matt. xxv. 35, 43. The case described is an ideal one, and may be thus expressed in paraphrase. 'The kindness of the nearest earthly friends may cease by death or desertion (for the verb to *leave* may comprehend both); but the Lord's compassions cannot fail.'

11. *Guide me, Jehovah, (in) thy way, and lead me in a straight (or level) path, because of my adversaries.* The way in which he here desires to be led is not the way of duty but of providence, which he calls a straight or smooth path, as distinguished from the rough or crooked ways of adversity. See above, on Ps. xxv. 4. xxvi. 12.—*Because of my enemies*, that they may have no occasion to exult or triumph. Of the many Hebrew words applied to enemies, the one here used is supposed by some to signify malignant *watchers* for the errors or calamities of others. The one used in the next verse means oppressors or causers of distress—With this clause compare Ps. xxvi. 12.

12. *Give me not up to the will of my enemies; for risen up against me are witnesses of falsehood, and a breather forth of cruelty.* The word translated *will* properly means *soul*, and is here used for the ruling wish or heart's desire, as, in Ps. xxxv. 25. The second clause assigns the ground or reason of this prayer. As if he had said: I have reason to ask this *for* there have risen up, &c.—*One breathing violence or cruelty*, a strong but natural expression for a person, all whose thoughts and feelings are engrossed by a favourite purpose or employment, so that he cannot live or breathe without it. Compare the description of Saul's persecuting zeal in Acts ix. 1 and the Latin phrases, *spirare minas, anhelare scelus*

13. *Unless I believed* (or fully expected) *to look upon the goodness of Jehovah in the land of life.* This is an instance of the figure called aposiopesis, in which the conclusion of the sentence is suppressed, either from excitement and hurried feeling, or because of some unwillingness to utter what is necessary to complete it. Thus in this case the apodosis would probably have been, *I would despair*, or *I must have perished.* (Compare Ps. cxix. 92.) Of the other cases usually cited, that in Gen. xxxi. 42 especially resembles this, because the sentence opens with a similar conditional expression.—*To look upon*, not merely to *behold*, but to *gaze at* with delight. See above, on Ps. xxii. 18 (17).—*The land of life*, as opposed to that of darkness and the shadow of death (Job x. 21), seems to be a more correct translation than the common one, *land of the living.*

14. *Wait thou for Jehovah; be firm, and may he strengthen thy heart; and wait thou for Jehovah!* Instead of finishing the inauspicious sentence which he had begun, he interrupts himself with an earnest exhortation to await the fulfilment of God's promises, to hope in him. See above, on Ps. xxv. 3.—The optative and causative senses of the third verb (יִצְמַח) are both determined by its form, which equally forbids the versions *let thy heart be strong* and *he will strengthen it.*—The repetition, *wait for the Lord, and wait for the Lord*, implies that this is all he has to enjoin upon himself or others, and is more impressive, in its native simplicity, than the correct but paraphrastic version of the last clause in the English Bible, *wait, I say, upon the Lord*

## PSALM XXVIII.

As in the preceding psalm a righteous sufferer prays that he may not be confounded with the wicked whom his soul abhors, so here a like prayer is offered by the Anointed of Jehovah. He first prays in general for audience and acceptance, without which he must quickly perish, vs. 1, 2. He then asks to be distinguished from the wicked in the infliction of God's judgments, vs. 3—5. He then gives thanks for the anticipated answer to his prayer, vs. 6—8, and implores an extension of the blessing to all God's people at all times, v. 9. The collocation of the psalm is clearly not fortuitous, but founded on its close resemblance to the one before it.

1. *By David. Unto thee, Jehovah, will I call; my rock, be not silent from me, lest thou hold thy peace from me, and I be made like to those going down (into) the pit.* My rock, the immovable foundation of my hope and object of my trust. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3, 32 (2, 31.) xix. 15 (14.) That God is such, affords a sufficient reason for the importunate demands which follow. It is inconsistent with the relation he sustains to those who trust him, that he should be silent when they pray, i. e. refuse to answer. The ideas of distance and estrangement are really implied in being silent, and suggested by the pregnant construction *silent from*. The meaning of the last clause is correctly given, with a change of idiom, in the English version, *lest, if thou be silent, &c.* The passive verb does not merely

mean to be like, but to be made like, assimilated, confounded. *The pit*, the grave, both in its narrower and wider sense. (Compare Isai. xiv. 15, 19.) *Those going down into the pit* is a common description of the dead. See Ps. xxx. 4 (3.) lxxxviii. 5 (4), and compare Ps. xxii. 30 (29.)

2. *Hear the voice of my supplications, in my crying unto thee* (for help); *in my lifting up my hands to thy holy oracle*. In my crying, in my lifting, i. e. at the time of my so doing, when I am in the very act. The lifting up of the hands is a natural symbol of the raising of the heart or the desires to God, and is therefore often mentioned in connexion with the act of prayer. Ex. ix. 29. xvii. 11, 12. 1 Kings viii. 22, 54. Lam. ii. 19. iii. 41. Ps. lxiii. 5 (4.)—The word translated *oracle* is derived from the verb to speak, and seems to mean a place of speaking or conversation, like the English *parlour* from the French *parler*. Now we learn from Ex. xxv. 22. Num. vii. 89, that the place whence God talked with Moses was the inner apartment of the tabernacle; and from 1 Kings vi. 19, that the corresponding part of the temple bore the name here used. To this, as the depository of the ark and the earthly residence of God, the ancient saints looked as we look now to Christ, in whom the idea of the Mosaic sanctuary has been realized. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.)

3. *Draw me not away with wicked (men), and with workers of iniquity, speaking peace with their neighbours, and evil (is) in their heart*. This is the prayer for which he bespeaks audience and acceptance in the foregoing verse. *Draw me not away*, i. e. to punishment or out of life. Compare Ps. xxvi. 9, where the parallel expression is *gather me not*. In both cases he prays that he may not be confounded in his death with those whose life he abhors. The last clause exhibits a particular trait in the character of the *wicked men* and *evil doers* of the

other clause. This trait is hypocritical dissimulation, the pretence of friendship as a mask to hatred. The simple construction with the copulative *and* is equivalent to our expressions, *but through, while*, etc.

4. *Give to them according to their act, and according to the evil of their deeds, according to the work of their hands give thou to them; return their treatment to them.* Having prayed that he may not share the destruction of the wicked, he now prays that they may not escape it. But as this is merely asking God to act as a just and holy being must act, the charge of vindictive cruelty is not merely groundless but absurd.—The *evil of their deeds* is a phrase borrowed from Moses (Deut. xxviii. 20) and often repeated by Jeremiah (iv. 4. xxi. 12. xxiii. 2, 22. xxvi. 3. xlv. 22.) The same prophet has combined two of the phrases here employed in Jer. xxv. 14 and Lam. iii. 64. The word translated *treatment* is a participle meaning that which is done by one person to another, whether good or evil. See above, on Ps. vii. 5 (4.)

5. *Because they will not attend to the acts of Jehovah and to the doing of his hands, he will pull them down and will not build them up.* Having appealed to the divine justice for a righteous recompense of these offenders, he now shows what they have deserved and must experience, by showing what they have done, or rather not done. The acts of Jehovah and the works of his hands are common expressions for his penal judgments. See Ps. lxiv. 10 (9.) xcii. 5 (4.) Isai. v. 12. xxviii. 21. xxix. 23.—*Pull down and not build up*, is an idiomatic combination of positive and negative terms to express the same idea.—*Build*, therefore, does not mean *rebuild*, but is simply the negative or opposite of *pull down*. The form of expression is copied repeatedly by Jeremiah (xxxi. 28. xlii. 10. xlv. 4.) See also Job xii. 14.



6. *Blessed (be) Jehovah, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications* What he asked in v. 2 he has now obtained, or at least the assurance of a favourable answer, in the confident anticipation of which he begins already to bless God. The word translated *supplications* means, according to its etymology, prayers for grace or mercy.

7. *Jehovah my strength and my shield! In him has my heart trusted, and I have been helped, and my heart shall exult, and by my song I will thank (or praise) him.* The construction of the first clause as a proposition, by supplying the substantive verb, *Jehovah (is) my strength and my shield*, is unnecessary, and neither so simple nor so strong as that which makes it a grateful and admiring exclamation.—*My heart* is twice used in this sentence to express the deep and cordial nature of the exercises which he is describing. The same heart that trusted now rejoices. As he believed with all his heart, so now he rejoices in like manner.—*By my song*, literally *from or out of it*, as the source and the occasion of his praise Compare Ps. xxii. 26 (25.)

8. *Jehovah (is) strength to them, and a strong-hold of salvation (to) his Anointed (is) He.* The Psalmist having spoken hitherto not only for himself but for the people, here insensibly substitutes the third person plural for the first person singular. In the last clause he reverts to himself, but with the use of an expression which discloses his relation to the people, of which he was not only a member but the delegated head, the *Anointed* of Jehovah. See above, on Ps. ii. 2. *A strong-hold.* See above, on Ps. xxvii. 1.—*Salvations*, full salvation. See above on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) The personal pronoun at the end of the sentence is emphatic and intended to concentrate the attention upon one great object.

9. *Oh save thy people, and bless thy heritage, and feed them, and carry (or exalt them) even to eternity!* The whole psalm closes with a prayer that the relation now subsisting between God and his people may continue forever. *Thy heritage*, thy peculiar people, whom thou dost preserve and treat as such from generation to generation. The idea and expression are Mosaic. See Deut. ix. 29, and compare Ps. xxxiii. 12. lxxviii. 10 (9.) xciv. 5. The image then merges into that of a shepherd and his flock, a favourite one with David and throughout the later Scriptures. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 1.—*Feed them*, not only in the strict sense, but in that of doing the whole duty of a shepherd. The next verb is by some translated *carry them*, in which sense the primitive is elsewhere used in speaking of a shepherd (Isai. xl. 11), and this very form appears to have the same sense in Isaiah lxiii. 9, while in 2 Sam. v. 12 it is applied to the exaltation of David himself as a theocratic sovereign.

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## PSALM XXIX.

THE essential idea in this psalm is the same as in the twenty-eighth, to wit, that God is the strength of his people, but clothed in a different costume, the divine power being proved or exemplified by its exertion in the elements, and then applied, in the close, to the believer's consolation. The Psalmist first invokes the heavenly host to celebrate their sovereign's honour, vs. 1, 2. He then describes Jehovah's voice as producing the most striking physical effects, vs. 3—9, and represents it as be-

onging to the same God who presided at the deluge and who now protects and will continue to protect and bless his people, vs. 10, 11. The superficial notion that this psalm is merely a description of a thunderstorm, or of Jehovah as the God of thunder, may be corrected by observing that the last verse gives the key-note of the whole composition.

1. *A Psalm by David. Give to Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty, give to Jehovah honour and strength.* To give, in such connexions, is to recognise something as belonging to another, to ascribe it to him. The form of expression is derived from Deut. xxxii. 3, and is found not only elsewhere in the Psalms (xcvi. 7 8), but with a slight modification in the New Testament (Rev. iv. 11. v. 12. xix. 1. 1 Peter v. 11.)—The word translated *mighty* is the plural form of one of the names (אֱלֹהִים) which describe God as omnipotent. See above, on Ps. v. 5 (4.) vii. 12 (11.) x. 11, 12. xvi. 1. xvii. 6 (5.) xviii. 3, 31 33, 48 (2, 30, 32, 47,) xix. 2 (1.) xxii. 2 (1.) The plural form may here arise from assimilation, both parts of the compound phrase being put into the plural, *son of God, sons of Gods*. Compare *words of deceits*, Ps. xxxv. 20. But a much more probable solution is that אֱלֹהִים is here used as אֱלֹהִיִּם is elsewhere, by a kind of ellipsis for אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים, Dan. xi. 36, *the God of Gods*, or the Supreme God. Compare Deut. x. 17.—*The sons of God* are the beings intermediate between God and man, sometimes called *angels* in reference to their office. The same application of the same phrase occurs in Ps. lxxxix. 7 (6.)

2. *Give to Jehovah the honour of his name; bow to Jehovah in beauty of holiness.* The honour of his name is that belonging to it, due to it. His name is his manifested nature. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) The verb in the last clause strictly means, bow down or prostrate yourselves in worship.—*The beauty of holiness* is by many understood to mean holy or con-

secrated garments, such as were put on in the place of ordinary dress, as a token of reverence, by the priests when they approached into the presence of Jehovah. See 2 Chr. xx. 21. But neither here nor in Ps. xcvi. 9. cx. 3, is there any valid objection to the obvious but spiritual sense of ornament produced by or consisting in holiness, such decoration as became the peculiar people of Jehovah. Compare 1 Peter iii. 3—5.

3. *The voice of Jehovah on the waters!* *The God of glory thundered.* *The voice of Jehovah (was) on many waters.* The invocation to the heavenly host in the two preceding verses is now justified by an appeal to one particular manifestation of God's majesty, to wit, that afforded by the tempestuous strife of elements.—The first clause may be construed as an exclamation, or the substantive verb may be supplied, either in the past or present tense. The preterite form of the original does not relate to any specific point of past time, but merely shows that the phenomena described have been heretofore witnessed, and though grand are nothing new. Our present tense gives the sense correctly, but with a departure from the idiomatic form of the original.—*The God of Glory* contains an allusion to vs. 1, 2. Compare Ps. xxiv. 7—10.—*On (or above) the waters*, i. e. the clouds charged with rain. See above, on Ps. xviii. 12 (11), and compare Jer. x. 13.

4. *The voice of Jehovah in power!* *The voice of Jehovah in majesty!* The exclamations, as in v. 3, may be converted into propositions by supplying either the past or present tense of the verb *to be*. 'The voice of Jehovah *is* (or *was*) in power.' In power, in majesty, i. e. invested with these attributes, a stronger expression than the corresponding adjectives, *strong* and *majestic*, would be, and certainly more natural and consonant to usage than the construction which makes *in* a mere sign of that in which something else consists. It is indeed little short of

nonsense to affirm that the voice of God consists in power, consists in majesty, whereas there is truth as well as beauty in describing it as clothed or invested with those qualities.

5. *The voice of Jehovah (is) breaking cedars, and Jehovah has broken the cedars of Lebanon.* In the powerful working of the elements the Psalmist hears the voice of God. That this expression always denotes thunder (Ex. ix. 28), is a perfectly gratuitous assumption.—Cedars are mentioned as the loftiest forest trees, and those of Lebanon as the loftiest of the species. Between the verbs of the two clauses there is a twofold variation which appears to be significant. The first is the primitive verb which simply means to break; the other an intensive form, implying an extraordinary violence. See above, Ps. iii. 8 (7.) This distinction can be reproduced in English only by a change of verb (*break* and *crush*), or by some qualifying addition (*break* and *break in pieces*.) But besides this variation, the first word is an active participle (*breaking*) and the second a finite tense denoting past time (*broke* or *has broken*), which together may indicate progression (*it is breaking* and now *he has broken*) or express the same idea, namely, that he habitually breaks, or has often broken, the cedars of Lebanon.

6. *And made them skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like the young of the unicorns (antelopes or wild bulls.)* The pronoun in the first clause may refer to *cedars*, or by anticipation to *Lebanon and Sirion*. This last is the Sidonian name of Hermon (Deut. iii. 9), the principal summit in the range of Anti-libanus, here mentioned simply as a parallel to *Lebanon*, without any special local reference. By a similar rhetorical specification, the natural vivacity of young animals is specially ascribed to a particular species, well known to the writer and his readers as remarkable for wildness and agility. See above, on Ps. xxii. 22 (21.)

7. *The voice of Jehovah (is) hewing flames (or with flames) of fire.* The reference to lightning in this verse is universally admitted, some even seeing an allusion to the brief and sudden flash in the single clause of which the sentence is composed. Interpreters are not agreed, however, with respect to the specific image here presented. Some understand the act described to be that of *cleaving* or *dividing*, in allusion to the forked appearance of a flash of lightning; others that of *hewing out, extracting, flames*; and others that of *hewing with* them, i. e. using them as weapons of warfare or instruments of vengeance. This last construction is a common one in Hebrew, and is favoured here by the analogy of Isai. li. 9. Hos. vi. 5, where the same verb is applied to God's penal judgments.—The voice of God must here mean his authority or order, as it could not be said without absurdity, that the thunder either hews the lightning or hews with it.

8. *The voice of Jehovah is about to shake the wilderness; Jehovah will shake wilderness of Kadesh.* This is equivalent to saying that he can do so, the Hebrew verb having no distinct potential form. The verb translated *shake* is stronger, meaning properly to *cause to tremble*. Having spoken of God's power as exerted on the mountains he now says the same thing of the desert; and as the mountains which he specified were on the northern frontier, so the wilderness which he selects is that which bounded Palestine upon the south, the northern portion of the great Arabian desert, with which the Israelites had many strong associations, founded partly in their personal experience, but still more in their national history. See Deut. i. 19. viii. 15. xxxii. 10. It is in this point of view, and not simply as a plain, which it is not in its whole extent, that the wilderness of Kadesh is here added to Mount Lebanon.

9. *The voice of Jehovah can make hinds bring forth, and*



*strip forests; and in his temple, all of it says, Glory'* The use of the futures is the same as in the foregoing verse. As if to show that the divine control extends to things both small and great, the Psalmist passes suddenly from lofty mountains and vast deserts to the weakest animals, in whom the terror of his presence hastens the throes of parturition. See Job xxxix. 1—3, and compare 1 Sam. iv. 19. He then returns to more imposing natural phenomena, such as the stripping of the leaves and branches from whole forests by a mighty wind, which, no less than the thunder, is to be regarded as the voice of God.—The temple or palace mentioned in the last clause is not the temple at Jerusalem, nor any earthly structure, but heaven, or the whole frame of nature, considered as God's royal residence. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) Throughout this palace, *all of it*, i. e. all its parts, its contents, or its inhabitants—with special reference perhaps to the angelic hosts invoked in v. 1, who are then described as doing what he there invites them to do—not merely *speaks of his glory*, as the English version has it, but *says "glory."* as their constant and involuntary exclamation. As to the true sense of the verb אָמַר, see above, on Ps. iv. 5 (4.)

10. *Jehovah at the flood sat (enthroned), and Jehovah sits (as) King to eternity.* There are only two ways in which this verse can be understood. It must either be explained as introducing a new trait in the description of a tempest, namely, that of a flood or inundation—or referred to the universal deluge, as the grandest instance of the natural changes which had been described. In favour of the latter explanation may be urged the intrinsic grandeur of the image which it calls up, its better agreement with the solemn declaration in the last clause, the peculiar fitness of a great historical example just in this place, and the invariable usage of הַמַּבּוּל to mean Noah's flood. The sense of the whole verse may be thus expressed in paraphrase.

The God whose voice now produces these effects is the God who sat enthroned upon the deluge, and this same God is still reigning over nature and the elements, and will be able to control them forever.

11. *Jehovah strength to his people will give ; Jehovah will bless his people (with) peace.* This is the application of the whole psalm, clearly showing that the description of external changes was not given for its own sake, or for mere poetical effect, but as a source of consolation and a ground of hope to true believers, who are here assured, in a pregnant summary of all that goes before, that the God who is thus visible and audible in nature, who presided at the flood and is to reign forever, is pledged to exercise the power thus displayed for the protection and well-being of his people.

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## PSALM XXX.

AFTER a title, giving the historical occasion of the psalm v. 1, the writer praises God for a signal deliverance from destruction, vs. 2—4 (1—3), and calls upon God's people to join in the praise of the divine compassion, vs. 5—6 (4—5.) He then reverts to the cause of his affliction, vs. 7—8 (6—7), and recounts the means which he employed for its removal, vs. 9—11 (8—10), and for the success of which he vows eternal thankfulness, vs. 12 (13), 11 (12.) The occasion and design of the psalm will be considered in the exposition of the title or inscription, which constitutes the first verse of the Hebrew text.

1. *A Psalm. A Song of Dedication (for) the House. By David.* The construction *house of David*, although not ungrammatical, is forced, as that idea would, according to usage, have been otherwise expressed in Hebrew. This construction has moreover given rise to the false notion, that the psalm has reference to the dedication of the king's own dwelling, whereas *the house*, as an absolute phrase, can only mean the house of God. The historical occasion of the psalm is furnished by the narrative in 2 Sam. xxiv and 1 Chron. xxi. David's presumption in numbering the people had been punished by a pestilence, which raged until the destroying angel had, in answer to the king's prayer, been required to sheathe his sword. The spot, where this indication of God's mercy had been given, was immediately purchased by David, and consecrated by the erection of an altar, upon which he offered sacrifices, and received the divine approbation in the gift of fire from heaven (1 Chr. xxi. 26.) 'This place the king expressly calls the house of God (1 Chr. xxii. 1), either in the wide sense of the patriarchal *Bethel* (Gen. xxviii. 17, 22), or as the designated site of the temple, for which he immediately commenced his preparations (1 Chr. xxii. 2), and in reference to which this psalm might well be called a *song of dedication*, although naturally more full of the pestilence, and the sin which caused it, than of the sanctuary yet to be erected.

2 (1.) *I will exalt thee, oh Jehovah, because thou hast raised me up, and hast not let my enemies rejoice respecting me.* In the first clause there is an antithesis of thought, though not of form. 'I will raise thee because thou hast raised me.' The second verb is a modified form of one meaning to draw water from a well (Ex. ii. 16, 19), and may therefore have been chosen for the purpose of suggesting the idea of a person drawn up from some depth in which he had been sunk, a figure not unfrequent elsewhere. See particularly Ps. xl. 3 (2) below —

*Hast not caused or permitted to rejoice* by abandoning me to them.—*לִי* does not properly mean *over me*, but *as to me*. The specific idea of *rejoicing over* is suggested by the context.

3 (2.) *Jehovah, my God, I cried to thee (for help), and thou didst heal me.* The address, *my God*, is never unmeaning or superfluous, but always intimates a covenant relation as the ground of confidence. Any severe suffering is represented in scripture under the figure of disease, and relief from it as healing. See above, on Ps. vi. 3 (2), and compare Ps. xli. 5 (4), cvii. 20. Jer. xiv. 19. xv. 18. xvii. 14. xxx. 17. The healing here meant is identical with the help in v. 4 (3) and the joy in v. 12 (11,) and proves nothing therefore as to literal sickness in the Psalmist's case. It is altogether natural, however, to suppose that David may himself have been affected by the prevalent disorder.

4 (3.) *Jehovah, thou hast brought up out of hell my soul, thou hast made me alive from (among those) going down (into the) pit.* The extremity of his danger is described in the strongest terms afforded by the language. The essential meaning of both clauses is, that God had saved him from what seemed to be inevitable and irrecoverable ruin.—*Hell*, sheol, the state of the dead. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5).—*Going down into the pit*, i. e. dying. See above, on Ps. xxii. 30 (29.)—*Made me alive from them*, i. e. separated me from them by restoring or preserving my life, so that I no longer can be numbered with them.

5 (4.) *Make music to Jehovah, ye his gracious ones, and give thanks to the memory of his holiness.* The exhortation in the first clause is to praise God by song with instrumental accompaniment. See above, on Ps. vii. 18 (7.) ix. 3, (2, 11.)

*His gracious ones*, the objects of his mercy, and themselves endowed with the same attribute. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) — *Memory*, in this connexion, does not mean the power or the act of remembering, but that which is remembered when we think of God, to wit, his glorious perfections, which are summed up in *his holiness*, as to the comprehensive sense of which, see above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.) See also Hos. xii. 6 (5), where the *memory* of God is particularly coupled with his mercy, and Ex. iii. 15. Isai. xxvi. 8. Ps. cxxxv. 13, where *memory* and *name* are used as parallel expressions.

6 (5.) *For a moment in his wrath, life in his favour; in the evening shall lodge weeping, and at the morning shouting (or singing.)* Some understand the contrast in the first clause to be one of duration; there is only a moment in his wrath, but a life-time in his favour. It is simpler, however, and more agreeable to the usage of the word translated *life*, to read the clause without an antithesis; his wrath endures but a moment, and then his favour restores life, in its wide sense, as including all that makes existence desirable. The same idea is expressed in the last clause by a beautiful figure. Sorrow is only a sojourner, a stranger lodging for the night, to be succeeded, at the break of day, by a very different inmate. This, though primarily referring to the joys and sorrows of the present state, admits of a striking application to the contrast between this life and the next. See above, on Ps. xvii. 15.

7 (6.) *And I said in my security, I shall not be moved forever.* The pronoun is emphatic: it was I that said.—*Security*. The Hebrew word includes the ideas of prosperity, and of that self-confidence which it produces. Compare Deut. viii. 11—18. xxxii. 15. Hos. xiii. 6. 2 Chr. xxxii. 25.—*Moved*, disturbed in my enjoyment, shaken from my present firm position. See

above, on Ps. x. 6. xvi. 8, and compare Ps. xiii. 5 (4). xv. 8 xxi. 8 (7.)

8 (9.) *Jehovah, in thy favour thou didst establish to my mountain strength; thou didst hide thy face, I was confounded.* It was only through God's mercy that his power was established.—*Thou didst confirm strength* (literally make it stand) *to my mountain*, a common figure for royal power, and especially for that of the theocracy, the central point of which was Mount Zion. See 2 Sam. v. 9, 12. Neh. iii. 15. Mich. iv. 8. Isai. ii. 3. The idea of personal prosperity in general, though not expressed directly, is suggested by the special case of David's official eminence.—*Thou didst hide thy face*, withdraw the tokens of thy presence and thy favour. See above, on Ps. xiii. 2 (1.)—*I was confounded*, agitated, terrified perplexed. See above, on Ps. vi. 3, 4, 11 (2, 3, 10,) and compare Ps. ii. 5. The common version, *troubled*, is too weak.

9 (8.) *Unto thee Jehovah, will I call, and to Jehovah I will cry for mercy.* This was the resolution formed at the time when God concealed his face and he was troubled. The insertion of the words *then said I*, at the beginning of the verse, would render the connexion clear, but is unnecessary. The translation of the futures as past tenses is a licence which could only be justified by extreme exegetical necessity, certainly not by the trivial circumstance, that the last clause speaks of Jehovah in the third person, which is not more surprising in a prayer than the second person of the first clause would be in a narrative. The sudden change of person is of course the same in either case.

10 (9.) *What profit (is there) in my blood, in my descending to corruption (or the grave)? Will dust praise (or thank) thee? Will it tell thy truth?* This argument in favour of



his being heard and rescued is the same as that in Ps. vi. 6 (5), and reappears in Ps. lxxxviii. 11—13 (10—12), and in Hezekiah's psalm, Isai. xxxviii. 18, 19, both of which are obvious imitations of David. For the twofold etymology and sense of *אָרָה*, either of which is here appropriate, see above, on Ps. xvi. 10.—*Dust*, the lifeless and disorganized remains of the body.—*Tell thy truth*, attest the truth of thy promises by reciting their fulfilment, and so bear witness to the divine veracity and faithfulness. The questions of course imply negation. 'My destruction can be no advantage to the divine glory, but must rather involve a loss of praise.'

11 (10.) *Hear, Jehovah, and have mercy on me ; Jehovah, be a helper for (or to) me.* This petition is an indirect conclusion from the reasoning of the preceding verse. The logical connexion may be made clear by a change of form. 'Since thy glory will not be promoted by my death, I am entitled to deliverance, not for my sake but thy own.' This last idea is suggested by his appealing to the divine *mercy*, as the ground on which he asked God to become his helper.

12 (11.) *Thou hast turned my lament into a dance for me ; thou hast opened my sackcloth and hast girded me (with) joy.* To his prayer he now adds the account of its fulfilment. The relief of his distress is described as an exchange of his *lament* or funeral song for a joyful dance. Compare Jer. xxxi. 13. Lam. v. 15. In further allusion to the mourning customs of the east, he represents his mourning dress, made of the coarsest hair-cloth, as now *opened*, i. e. loosened, unfastened, for the purpose of removal, to be replaced not merely by a gay or festive dress, but by joy itself, poetically represented as a garment. See above, on Ps. xviii. 33, 40 (32, 39), and compare Isai. lxi. 3.

13 (12.) *In order that glory may make music to thee and not be dumb, Jehovah, my God, I will praise thee (or give thanks to thee) forever.* This verse describes not only the effect but the design of the deliverance asked for, and so furnishes a counterpart to the argument in v. 10 (9.) As the death of the psalmist would deprive God of praise, so his deliverance is intended to ensure it.—The use of *glory* in the first clause is obscure. Some understand by it the tongue or voice, which is entirely arbitrary; others the soul, the nobler part of man, as in Ps. xvi. 9. lvii. 9. cviii. 2 (1.) But as the form in all these cases is *my glory*, it seems better to take *glory* here without the pronoun in the wide sense of *every thing glorious*, including the worshipper's highest powers and perhaps his regal dignity, as in Ps. vii. 6 (5.) As in God's temple every thing says "Glory!" (Ps. xxix. 9), so every thing glorious among his works is bound to praise him.—*Not be dumb*, a stronger phrase than *not be silent*.—With the last clause compare the words of Hezekiah, Isai. xxxviii. 20.

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## PSALM XXXI.

THE psalmist first prays in general for deliverance from his sufferings and his enemies, on the ground of his confidence in God and previous experience of his mercy, vs. 2—9 (1—8.) He then prays more particularly for deliverance from his present danger, with a description of the same, vs. 10—14 (9—13.) In the remainder of the psalm, the tone of supplication and complaint is gradually exchanged for that of thankful assurance.

vs. 15—23 (14—22), and the whole is wound up with an application of the lesson furnished by the psalmist's experience to the case of all God's people, vs. 24—25 (23—24.)

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.* Here we meet again with the inscription, *to the chief musician*, which has not appeared before since the title of Ps. xxii. As in all other cases, it explicitly describes the psalm as intended for musical performance in the public worship of the ancient church. As this, however, was the case with all the psalms, the fact that it is mentioned only in some may be explained by supposing, that in them there was something which might otherwise have caused them to be looked upon as mere expressions of personal feeling.—The correctness of the other clause—*a Psalm of David*—is fully attested by internal evidence. The idea that Jeremiah wrote it rests entirely on the imitation of the first clause of v. 14 (13) in Jer. xx. 10, which is in perfect keeping with the practice of that prophet.

2 (1.) *In thee, Jehovah, have I trusted. Let me not be shamed for ever. In thy righteousness deliver me (or help me to escape.)* The first clause contains the ground of the petitions following, which ground is the same that is often urged elsewhere, namely, that a just God cannot destroy those who trust him. See above, Ps. vii. 2 (1.) xi. 1.—The prayer in the next clause may be either that his present shame may not endure *forever*, or that he may *never* be put to shame, which last idea could not well be otherwise expressed in Hebrew *Shamed*, i. e. utterly confounded, disappointed, and frustrated in his hopes. See above, on Ps. vi. 11 (10.) xxii. 6 (5.) xxv 2, 20. He appeals to God's righteousness or justice in the strict sense, upon which trust or faith creates a claim, even on the part of the unworthy, not by virtue of any intrinsic merit, but of God's gracious constitution. See above, on Ps. xvii. 1 2

xviii. 21--25 (20--24.) xxv. 21. xxvi. 1. This verse and the two following reappear, without material variation, in Ps. lxxi. 1--3.

3 (2.) *Incline unto me thine ear; (in) haste deliver me; be to me for a rock of strength for a house of defences to save me.* The prayer for speedy deliverance implies extreme necessity and danger. For the meaning of the figures, *rock of strength* and *house of defences* or fortress, see above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2,) and as to the plural form, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) xx. 7 (6.)—The petition of the first clause seems to imply that God had hitherto appeared to turn a deaf ear to his prayers. It may perhaps have been intended to suggest the additional idea, that his cry was feeble, so that it had hitherto escaped the ear of him to whom it was addressed, and who is now implored to bow down or incline his ear, that the distant sound may reach him.

4 (3.) *For my rock and my fortress (art) thou, and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me and conduct me (or provide for me.)* What he asks in the preceding verse he here asserts, to wit, that God is his protector, and must therefore of necessity protect him, not only for the sufferer's sake, but for the honour of his own name or manifested nature. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 3, for the meaning of this phrase, and on the second verse of the same psalm, for that of the last verb.—The futures in the second clause suggest the idea of necessity, and might perhaps be correctly rendered by the use of our auxiliary *must*.

5 (4.) *Thou wilt bring me out from the net which they have hid for me; for thou (art) my strength (or my stronghold.)* 'By thee I confidently hope to be delivered from the craft and malice of my enemies, for my defence and safety are in thee alone.' With the first clause compare Ps. xxv. 15, and

with the last Ps. xxvii. 1. The change of figure in the last clause shows the whole verse to be highly metaphorical.

6 (5.) *Into thy hand I will commit my spirit ; thou hast redeemed me, (oh) Jehovah, God of truth.* The verb in the first clause means to entrust or deposit any thing of value. By *my spirit* we may either understand *my life* or *myself*, but not *my soul* as distinguished from *my body*.—The preterite *thou hast redeemed*, expresses in the strongest manner his assured hope and the certainty of the event.—*God of truth*, veracity or faithfulness. See above, on Ps. xxv. 5, and compare Jer. x. 10. The words of the first clause of this verse were quoted or imitated by our Saviour on the cross (Luke xxiii. 46), which only proves that he considered himself one of those to whom the Psalm might be applied, but without excluding others ; and accordingly John Huss, while on his way to the stake, repeatedly quoted this whole verse as the expression of his own emotions.

7 (6.) *I have hated those regarding vanities of falsehood, and I (for my part) in Jehovah have confided.* The present is included in the preterite of the first clause. ‘I have hated them and hate them still.’ ‘I hate them and have done so heretofore.’ See above, Ps. xvi. 4. xxvi. 5.—*Regarding*, religiously observing, waiting upon, watching with respect and trust. Compare Hos. iv. 10. Zech. xi. 11. Jon. ii. 9 (8.) This last place contains also the word *vanities* here used, and even in the Law applied to idols, as no gods, and as “nothing in the world” (1 Cor. viii. 4.) See Deut. xxxii. 21, and compare Jer. ii. 5. x. 15. xiv. 22. xvi. 19. xviii. 15. The words here combined are highly contemptuous, denoting *vanities of emptiness* or *nothings of nonentity*, presented in contrast to *Jehovah God of truth*, in whom the Psalmist has confided. *And I*, as opposed to them ; see above, on Ps. ii. 6

8 (7.) *I will triumph and joy in thy mercy, thou who hast seen my affliction, hast known the pangs of my soul.* In the strength of his faith he sees deliverance already present.—*Hast known in the pangs of my soul*, i. e. in the time of my distress hast been aware of it, which seems to be the meaning of this verb and preposition elsewhere (Gen. xix. 33, 35. Job. xxxv. 15.) Luther and others give a different construction, *hast known my soul in distress*, but the other is favoured by the occurrence of the phrase *distress* (or *agonies*) *of soul* in Gen. xlii. 21 and Ps. xxv. 17. The sight and knowledge here applied to God imply a corresponding action. ‘Thou hast seen and known my state, and dealt with me accordingly.’ With the first clause compare Ps. ix. 3 (2.)

9 (8.) *And hast not shut me up in the hand of a foe, (but) hast made to stand in the wide place my feet.* To shut up in the hand of any one is to abandon to his power. The expression is a figurative one, but occurs in prose, and even in the history of David. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. xxvi. 8. The figure of the last clause is a favourite with David. See above, on Ps. iv. 2 (1.) xviii. 20, 37 (19, 36.)

10 (9.) *Have mercy upon me, oh Jehovah, for distress is to me; sunken through grief is my eye, my soul and my belly.* Having thus professed his confidence of ultimate deliverance, he reverts to his actual condition and prays for the divine interposition, on the ground of what he has already suffered. On the sinking or failing of the eye, as a sign of extreme grief and weakness, see above, on Ps. vi. 8 (7.) Having mentioned this as a specific symptom, he then uses the generic terms, *soul* and *belly*, i. e. *body*.—For the true sense of the word translated *grief*, see above, on Ps. x. 14.

11 (10.) *For wasted with grief (or indignation) is my life*



*and my years with sighing ; my strength totters because of my iniquity, and my bones are decayed.* Wasted, consumed before the time.—*Life and years, grief and sighing*, are correlative expressions. Life is made up of years; grief is expressed by sighs and groans.—To *totter* or *stumble* is a verb applied elsewhere to the parts of the body—as the knees in Ps. cix. 24—here metaphorically to the strength itself.—*Because of my iniquity* or *guilt* is not inconsistent with the appeal to God's righteousness in v. 2 (1), but only proves that the Psalmist lays no claim to a sinless perfection. See above, on Ps. xviii. 24 (23).—The *bones* are mentioned as the seat of strength, the solid frame-work of the body.—*Decayed*, grown old, worn out. See below, on Ps. xxxii. 3.

12 (11.) *By means of (or because of) all my adversaries I was a reproach, and to my neighbours very (much), and a fear to my acquaintances ; seeing me in the street they fled from me (or those seeing me in the street fled from me.)* The first word properly means *from* or *out of*. It was from his enemies, both as the cause and the occasion, that his disgrace proceeded. *A reproach*, despised by others and considered a disgrace to them. See above, on Ps. xxii. 7 (6.) In the second clause there is an obvious progression. He was so esteemed not only by his fellow-men indefinitely, but by his neighbours, and that greatly (רַבָּה), which seems equivalent to saying 'and to none more than my neighbours,' or, 'above all to my neighbours.' In the last clause the climax is completed. Not only were his neighbours ashamed of him; his acquaintances were afraid of him. See below, Ps. xxxviii. 12 (11), lxix. 9 (8), lxxxviii. 19 (18), and compare Job xix. 13, 14.

13 (12.) *I was forgotten as a dead man out of mind ; I was like a broken vessel (or a vessel perishing.)* The next stage of his calamity was that of contemptuous oblivion, which usually

follows the acute one of disgust and shame described in the foregoing verse.—*From the heart*, i. e. the memory; the expression seems to correspond exactly to the second member of the English proverb: *out of sight, out of mind*.—The comparison with an earthen vessel, at best of little value, easily broken, and when broken worthless, only fit to be contemptuously thrown aside, is a favourite with Jeremiah, who appears to have derived it, with some other favourite ideas and expressions, from the psalm before us. See Jer. xix. 11. xxii. 28. xxv. 34. xlviii. 38, and compare Hos. viii. 8.

14 (13.) *For I heard the slander of many—terror (was) all around—in their consulting together against me, to take my soul (or my life) they plotted.* The *for* connects what follows not so much with what immediately precedes as with the general description of his urgent need in v. 10 (9), *Have mercy upon me, for distress is to me*, of which he is about to give another proof or instance. The first clause is closely copied in Jer. xx. 10, and the phrase *magor missabib* (‘fear round about’) is a favourite with that prophet. See Jer. vi. 25. xx. 3. xlv. 5. xlix. 29, and compare Lam. ii. 22.—The term used for *consulting* is akin to that in Ps. ii. 2.—The connexion between the slander of the first clause and the plotting of the second seems to be, that the former was regarded as a necessary means to the successful execution of the latter.

15 (14.) *And I on thee did trust, Jehovah; I said, my God (art) thou!* ‘Amidst these distresses, and in spite of them, I still confided in Jehovah, and expressed my confidence by solemnly avouching him to be my God, and therefore bound by covenant to save me, as I am no less bound by covenant to trust him.’ It is worthy of remark how constantly the ancient saints make trust in God essential to all spiritual safety.—With the last clause of this verse compare Ps. xvi. 1.

16 (15.) *In thy hand (are) my times ; set me free from the hand of my foes and from my persecutors.* By *times* we are to understand the current of events or the vicissitudes of life, as when we speak familiarly of good times, hard times, and the like. There may be also an allusion to the turning points or critical junctures of his history. The first clause presents the ground or reason of the second. ‘Since the events of my life are at thy disposal, set me free,’ &c. Freeing from the hand is the opposite of shutting up in it. See above, on v. 9 (8).—*Foes* and *persecutors*, not as distinct classes, but as different descriptions of the same.

17 (16.) *Let thy face shine on thy servant ; save me in thy mercy.* The first clause contains an allusion to the sacerdotal benediction recorded in Num. vi. 25. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6,) where we have a similar allusion to that passage. ‘Grant me a sensible assurance of thy favour.’ This he asks because he is his servant, a relation implying the necessity of God’s interposition in his favour. While God is God, he cannot leave his faithful servants to perish. Even here, however, his appeal is to God’s mercy, as the only source or means of safety.

18 (17.) *Jehovah, let me not be shamed, for I have called (upon thee.) Let the wicked be shamed, be silenced, in hell.* He distinguishes himself, as one who calls upon God, from the wicked who do not, and appeals to the righteousness of God as requiring that defeat, and disappointment, and frustration of the hopes, should fall, not upon the class to which he belongs and of which he is the representative, but upon that represented by his enemies, of whom it has been well said, that they are not reckoned sinners because they are his enemies, but enemies because they are sinners, or in other words, enemies to him because they are the enemies of God.—*Silenced* in reference

to their present loud and angry contests with the righteous.—*In hell*, or in the 'grave, i. e. in death.

19 (18.) *Struck dumb be the lips of lying, the (lips) speaking against a righteous (man), insolently in pride and scorn.* This wish has special reference to the slanders mentioned in v. 14 (13.)—*Insolently*, literally *insolent*, that which is insolent, or as an abstract, insolence, audacity.

20 (19.) *How great is thy goodness which thou hast hidden for those fearing thee, (and) wrought for (those) trusting in thee before the son of man (or mankind)!* Some suppose an antithesis between what God does secretly for those who trust him openly, or publicly profess their faith. Compare Matth. vi. 4. But usage and the masoretic accents are in favour of a different construction, which connects *before the sons of man* with *wrought*, and supposes the antithesis to be between the two successive stages of God's dispensations towards believers, first what he does in secret, and then what he does in public. 'How great is thy goodness which thou hast first treasured up, and then wrought openly before the sons of men for those who trust thee.'

21 (20.) *Thou wilt secrete them in the secret of thy face (or presence) from the leagues of man; thou wilt hide them in a covert from the strife of tongues.* A particular manifestation of this goodness is now specified, to wit, the protection of its objects from the craft and malice of their fellow-men. The figures are the same as in the first clause of Ps. xxvii. 5, except that the presence of God is substituted for his dwelling, which indeed derives its power of protection solely from that presence. The *leagues* or *plots of man* are those mentioned in v. 14 (13), and the *strife of tongues* the *slander* there referred to; not the

strife of tongues in mutual dispute among his enemies, but the united strife of all their tongues against himself.

22 (21.) *Blessed (bē, Jehovah, for he hath made his mercy wonderful to me in a city of defence (or fortified city.)* What he had just asserted to be generally true of all believers, he now declares to have been verified in his own experience.—*Has made his mercy wonderful*, has exercised surprising mercy, or in modern phrase, has been wonderfully gracious.—*In a fenced city* is by some understood to mean *as* such a city, a comparison which really occurs in other places. For another supposed instance of the same construction, see above, on Ps. xxix. 4. In this case, however, as in that, the strict sense of the particle may be retained, not only without injury but with advantage to the sense, which will then be, that *Jehovah* had exercised extraordinary mercy towards the Psalmist by bringing him into a position where he was as safe from the evils which he felt or feared as he would have been from mere corporeal perils in a walled town or a fortress.

23 (22.) *And (yet it was) I (that) said in my terror, I am cut off from before thine eyes. Nevertheless, thou didst hear the voice of my prayers (for mercy) in my crying unto thee (for help.)* The full force of the emphatic pronoun can be represented only by a paraphrase. The meaning is that this very person who experiences this wonderful protection was the same who, but a little while before, had given himself up for lost.—*In my haste*. The Hebrew word denotes the hurried flight of one escaping panic-struck from his pursuers. See the literal application of the verb, in historical prose, to the case of David himself, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, and compare Ps. xlviii. 6 (5.) civ. 7. Our idiom absolutely requires an adversative particle at the beginning of the second clause, although the Hebrew word is properly a particle of affirmation, meaning *certainly* or *surely*. Notwithstanding

his despondency and unbelief, Jehovah heard and answered his prayers for mercy and his cries for help, both which ideas are suggested in the original.

24 (23.) *Love Jehovah, ye his gracious ones* (or *favoured ones*); *faith-keeping* (is) *Jehovah, and repaying in plenty* (the man) *working pride* (or *acting proudly*.) In this and the remaining verse, he makes a further application of the truth, which he had just attested from his own experience, to the case of all God's saints or gracious ones, at once the subjects and the objects of benignant dispositions, those who are merciful because they obtain mercy (Matt. v. 7.) See above, on Ps. iv 4 (3).—The next words admit of two interpretations: *keeping* (preserving) *the faithful*, and *keeping faith*, literally *fidelities*, the plural being often used in Hebrew as an abstract. The predominant usage of אֱמוּנָה is in favour of this last construction. See above, on Ps. xii. 2 (1.) *Keeping faith* of course means with those who are faithful to himself, so that we still have the antithesis between them and the man *doing, exercising pride*, a form of speech much stronger than its English equivalent, *acting proudly*.—*Abundantly*, or literally, *in plenty*

25 (24.) *Be strong, and let him confirm your heart, all ye that wait for Jehovah* (or *hope in him*.) The idea and the form of expression are the same as in Ps. xxvii. 14, except that what the Psalmist there says to himself, or to his own soul, he here says to all that hope in God or wait for the fulfilment of his promises. See the same description of God's people in Ps. xxxiii. 18 below.—*Be strong* in purpose and desire, and he will make you strong in fact. This promise is conveyed under the form of a wish, *may he strengthen* (or *confirm*) *your heart*. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 14.



## PSALM XXXII.

THE Psalm opens with a general assertion of the blessedness arising from the pardon of sin, vs. 1, 2, which is then exemplified by a statement of the Psalmist's own experience, vs. 3—6, and extended to the case of others also, vs. 7—9, the whole ending, as it began, with an assertion of the misery of sinners and the happiness of the righteous, vs. 10, 11.

1. *By David. Maschil. Happy (he whose) transgression (is) taken away, covered (his) sin.* The ascription of the psalm to David is not only free from all improbability, and recognised in the New Testament (Rom. iv. 6,) but confirmed by its resemblance to his other compositions, and by a seeming reference to a signal incident in David's life, described as unique in the history itself (1 Kings xv. 5), and the same which gave occasion to the fifty-first psalm. The feelings here described bear a striking analogy to those recorded in the narrative, 2 Sam. xii, as will be more distinctly pointed out below. But although there is reason to believe that this psalm was connected, in its origin, with a peculiar and most painful passage of the writer's own experience, it was not intended to express his personal emotions merely, nor even those of other saints in precisely the same situation, but to draw from this one case a general lesson, as to the misery of impenitent dissimulation, and the happiness arising from confession and forgiveness. And lest this wide scope of the psalm should be lost sight of

in the contemplation of the circumstances which produced it it is described in the inscription as a *maschil*, an instructive or didactic psalm, a designation which, in the case of many other psalms, would be superfluous, and which is actually found, for the most part, only where the didactic purpose of the composition is for some cause less obvious than usual. (Compare the introduction to Ps. xxxiv. below.) That the *maschil* was prefixed by David himself, is rendered still more probable by the allusion to it in the body of the psalm. See below, on v. 8.—*Taken away*, put out of sight, the same idea that is expressed in the other clause by *covered*. This verse is explained by Paul, in Rom. iv. 6, as relating to justification “without works” and “by faith.”

2. *Happy man—Jehovah will not impute to him iniquity—and there is not in his spirit guile.* The peculiar form of the construction may be thus resolved into our idiom: happy the man to whom the Lord &c. The phrase at the beginning, *oh the happinesses of the man*, is substantially the same as in Ps. i. 1.—*Impute*, reckon or charge to his account, and deal with him accordingly. The whole phrase occurs in 2 Sam. xix. 20 (19.) The threefold designation, *sin*, *transgression*, and *iniquity*, seems to be borrowed from Ex. xxxiv. 7, where the doctrine of forgiveness is first fully and explicitly propounded.—*Guile*, deceit, including self-deception as to one's own character and dissimulation in the sight of God, the attempt to palliate or conceal sin instead of freely confessing it, which is an indispensable condition of forgiveness, according to the doctrine of both testaments, (Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 8—10.)

3. *For I kept silence (and) my bones decayed, in my roaring all the day.* The sentence admits of several different constructions—‘because I kept silence my bones decayed’—when I kept silence,’ &c. But the simplest is that which gives

the *וַיִּשָּׁן* its usual and proper meaning, and supposes it to introduce the psalmist's proof of the preceding proposition drawn from his own experience. 'I know this happiness, *for* I was once in a different condition and have been delivered.'—*Kept silence*, refrained from acknowledging my sins to God. The bones are here put for the framework of the body, in which the strength resides, and the decay of which implies extreme debilitation. The verb translated *decayed* is especially applied to the weakening effect of time; they grew old, or wore out.—*In* denotes both time and cause—'while I roared' and 'because I roared.' The figure is borrowed from the habits of inferior animals, and means loud or passionate complaint. See above, in Ps. xxii. 2' (1.) .

4. *For day and night thy hand weighs upon me; changed is my moisture in (or into) drougths of summer. Selah.* The *for* at the beginning shows the connexion of this verse with that before it, as assigning the cause of the decay there mentioned. 'My bones waxed old *because* thy hand,' &c.—The future in the first clause cannot, without arbitrary violence, be taken as a preterite. It seems to have been used for the purpose of describing his condition as it seemed to him at the time, when the hand of God not only weighed upon him but seemed likely still to do so. See above, on Ps. xviii. 17 (16.) The word translated *moisture*, i. e. vital juice, analogous to the sap of plants, is so explained from an Arabic analogy; but some think this sense inappropriate in the only other case where the Hebrew word occurs (Num. xi. 8), and infer from Ps. cii. 5 (4), that it is an unusual expression for the heart. His inward agonies are represented as intense and parching heats.

5. *My sin I will make known to thee, and my guilt I did not conceal. I said, I will make confession of my transgressions to Jehovah. And thou didst take away the guilt of my*

*sin. Selah.* Most interpreters explain the future verb of the first clause as a preterite, because all the other verbs are preterites; but this only renders the future form of the first verb more remarkable and makes it harder to explain why a past tense was not used in this, as in all the other cases, if the writer intended to express past time. The only consistent method of solution is to understand the first clause as a reminiscence of the psalmist's resolution in the time of his distress, repeated in the second clause, and in both cases followed by a recital of the execution of his purpose. (I said,) my sin I will make known to thee and my guilt I (accordingly) did not conceal. I said, I will make confession to Jehovah, and thou didst take away the guilt of my sin. See above, on Ps. xxx. 9 (8.)

6. *For this shall every gracious one make supplication to thee at the (right) time (for) finding (thee); surely at the overflow of many waters, unto him they shall not reach.* The first words are equally ambiguous in Hebrew and in English. At first sight, both may seem to mean, for this grace, this forgiveness, every godly man shall pray to thee. But although this construction yields a good sense, it is less consistent with the usage of the Hebrew verb and preposition than another which explains the phrase to mean *for this cause*, or on this account, to wit, because I have experienced the blessedness of penitent confession and the pardon which invariably follows it. For the true sense of הִסְתִּיר, see above, on Ps. xxxi. 24 (23).—*Shall pray* is not a mere prediction or anticipation, but a jussive future, such as is constantly employed in laws. The sense might therefore be conveyed by rendering it, *let every pious person pray*.—*The time of finding* is the time when God is to be found. See Isai. lv. 6, and compare Deut. iv. 29. Jer. xxix. 12—14. In this case there may be a particular allusion to the interval between the sin and punishment, during which the penitent confessions and importunate petitions of the sinner

—i. e. the offending saint, to whom alone the Psalmist here refers—may avail to avert the judgments which must otherwise inevitably follow. This effect is described in the last clause by the figure of a flood which is not suffered to extend to him. The word translated *surely* means in strictness *only*; i. e. the effect of such a prayer will be only this, or, as we say, neither more nor less.

7. *Thou (art) a hiding-place for me; from distress thou wilt preserve me; with songs (or shouts) of deliverance thou wilt surround me. Selah.* This is not, as some suppose, the prayer itself, which the believer is exhorted, in v. 6, to offer, but a confirmation of the truth of the assurance that the prayer will prove effectual, derived from the Psalmist's own experience, or rather from the feelings which it has produced. As if he had said: 'Every gracious soul may try this method without fear of disappointment, for I have tried it, and the effect is that, at this very moment, God is my refuge and protector, and I feel a strong assurance that he has the joy of his salvation in reserve for me.' The solemnity and truth of this profession are then indicated by a meditative pause, denoted in the usual manner.

8. *I will instruct thee and will guide thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will counsel thee, my eye (shall be) upon thee.* Some regard these as the words of God to David; but besides the gratuitous assumption of two different speakers in the two successive verses, without any thing to indicate a change, the obvious allusion in the first word (אֶשְׁכִּילָךְ) to the laconic title of the psalm (מִשְׁכִּיל) —as if the instruction there promised was about to be imparted—makes it altogether probable that David is here speaking in his own person and fulfilling the vow recorded in another place, that when forgiven and restored to communion with God, he would teach transgressors his ways. See Ps li. 15 (13.) He may therefore be considered as ad

dressing another like himself—to wit, a godly person (חֲסִיד) overtaken in transgression or exposed to strong temptation—and offering to point out to him the path of safety. The construction of the latter clause which some prefer—*I will counsel for thee (with) my eye*—is much less natural and simple than the one above given, where the phrase, *my eye is (or shall be) upon thee*, adds to the idea of advice that of friendly watchfulness and supervision.

9. *Be ye not as a horse (or) as a mule (in which) there is no understanding—in bridle and bit (consists) its ornament, to muzzle it, (because of its) not approaching to thee.* The counsel or advice, which was promised in the previous versè, is here imparted. The plural form does not imply a change in the object of instruction, but merely shows that the individual addressed in v. 8 was the representative of a whole class, namely, that described by the collective phrase, *every gracious (person)*, in v. 6.—The mule is, among various nations, a proverbial type of stubborn persistency in evil, and we find analogous allusions to the horse in Jer. v. 8. viii. 6. The reason for using a comparison with brutes is intimated in the second clause, to wit, that the debased irrationality of sin might be distinctly brought into view. The analogy is carried out with no small subtilty by representing that what seems to be the trappings or mere decoration of these brutes is really intended to coerce them, just as that in which men pride themselves may be, and if necessary will be used by God for their restraint and subjugation. The common version of the last clause—*lest they come near unto thee*—would be suitable enough in speaking of a wild beast, but in reference to a mule or horse the words can only mean, because they will not follow or obey thee of their own accord, they must be constantly coerced, in the way both of compulsion and restraint.



10. *Many pains (are) to the wicked ; and (as to) the (man) trusting in Jehovah, mercy shall encompass him, or, he will encompass him (with) mercy.* In this and the remaining verse the Psalmist loses sight, not only of the horse and mule, to which he had compared the stubborn sinner, but of the particular case which had occasioned the comparison, and closes with the statement of a general truth, founded in necessity and verified by all experience, that sin produces misery and trust in God salvation. It is implied though not expressed in the first clause, that the sufferings of the wicked, while he still continues such, are hopeless and incurable, while those to which the righteous is subjected, are salutary in effect and temporary in duration. See below, Ps. xxxiv. 20 (19). Here again as in Ps. xxxi. 15 (14) above, we may observe that the antithesis is not between the wicked and the absolutely righteous, but between the wicked and the man trusting in Jehovah, and that the effect ascribed to this trust is not the recognition of the man's inherent righteousness, but his experience of God's mercy, which implies that he is guilty and unworthy in himself, and can only be delivered from the necessary consequences of his sin, by simply trusting in the mercy of the very Being whom he has offended.—Of the two constructions given in the version of the closing words, the last is recommended by the analogy of v. 7, where the same verb governs two accusatives.

11. *Rejoice in Jehovah, and exult, ye righteous, and shout (or sing) all ye upright in heart!* This is the practical use to be made of the preceding doctrine ; for if that be true, it follows that the righteous have abundant cause for exultation, not in themselves but in Jehovah, i. e. in their knowledge and possession and enjoyment of him.—*The righteous*, as opposed to the *wicked* ; not the absolutely perfect, but those trusting in the mercy of Jehovah for deliverance both from punishment and sin. The verb of the second clause is properly a causative and

means to make others shout or sing for joy. See Deut xxxii. 43 Ps. lxxv. 9 (8.) Job xxix. 13. In one place however, Ps. lxxxii. 2 (1), it appears to be intransitive, and such may be the case here, where the other verbs mean simply to rejoice.

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### PSALM XXXIII.

A SONG of praise, intended to excite and to express the confidence of Israel in Jehovah, and closely connected with the didactic psalm before it, the closing sentiment of which is here carried out. This intimate relation of the two psalms may account for the absence of a title in the one before us, as in the case of the ninth and tenth. See above, p. 75.

After a general invitation to praise God, vs. 1—3, the reasons are assigned, to wit, his truth, faithfulness, and mercy, vs. 4—6, his creative power, vs. 7—9, and his control of human agents, not only individuals but whole nations, making them subservient to his own designs, vs. 10, 11, from all which is inferred the happy lot of his peculiar people, v. 12. The Psalmist then continues his praise of God, as omniscient, vs. 13, 14, and contrasts the insufficiency of all created help, vs. 15, 16, with the security of those whom he protects, vs. 17, 18, and the whole concludes with an expression of strong confidence in Him, on the part of all his people, vs. 19—21.

1. *Exult, ye righteous, in Jehovah! To the upright suitable (is) praise.* The Hebrew verb, according to the etymologists, originally means to dance for joy, and is therefore a very

strong expression for the liveliest exultation. *In Jehovah*, i. e. in the knowledge and possession of him, with particular reference to the covenant relation between him and his peculiar people, who are here called the *righteous* and the *upright*, by way of eminence, as in Num. xxiii. 10, not because they were all actually so, but because they ought to have been so, as this was the idea or, so to speak, the theory of a chosen people, and those natural descendants of Israel who were not of this character were not entitled to the privileges of the church, which, on the contrary, to the true Israel, were legitimate occasion of rejoicing and made praise peculiarly *comely* or *suitable* to them.

2. *Give thanks to Jehovah with a harp; with a lyre of ten (strings) make music to him.* The first verb means to acknowledge, either sins or favours; in the first case, it answers to *confess*, Ps. xxxii. 5, in the other to *thank*, Ps. vii. 18 (17.) See also Ps. xxviii. 7. xxx. 10 (9.) The common version, *praise*, is too indefinite, though this idea is undoubtedly included. The mention of the instruments does not exclude vocal praise, but merely gives it an accompaniment and support, as if the voice were too weak by itself to utter the divine praise. The precise form of the instruments here named is now unknown and wholly unimportant. The ten strings of the second are mentioned, either to identify it by a familiar circumstance, or, as some suppose, because the number had a mystical significance. The same combination reappears below in Ps. cxliv. 9, while in Ps. xcii. 4 (3), the two words are separately used, as if denoting different instruments.

3. *Sing unto him a new song; play well with joyful noise!* A new song implies the continual recurrence of fresh reasons and occasions for the praise of God, and also the spontaneous ebullition of devout and thankful feelings in the hearts of those

by whom the praise is offered. This is the first instance of the expression, but it frequently reappears in later psalms—Ps. xl 4 (3), xcvi. 1, xcvi. 1—and once or twice in the New Testament, Rev. v. 9. xiv. 3.—*Play well*, literally *do well to play* or *in playing*. This peculiar idiom occurs in the history of David, 1 Sam. xvi. 17.—*Joyful noise*, see above, on Ps. xxvii. 6, in which place, as in this, there is no certain or necessary reference to sacrifice, but only to an audible and lively expression of religious feeling.

4. *For right is the word of Jehovah, and all his work is (done) in faithfulness.* The *word* here meant is the word of promise, and the *work* is its performance or fulfilment. The *word* is right or upright, i. e. uttered in sincerity and with a full determination to redeem it. *In faithfulness*, executed faithfully. Compare Num. xxiii. 19. Ps. cv. 42.

5. *Loving righteousness and justice—(with) the mercy of Jehovah is the earth filled.* He is loving, i. e. he habitually loves. The last clause represents God's mercy as a matter of notorious and universal observation, and the whole verse exhibits his justice and his mercy as in harmony with one another, and equally consolatory to his people.

6. *By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.* Having set forth the righteousness, fidelity, and mercy of Jehovah, as displayed on earth, the Psalmist now demonstrates his ability to deliver and protect his people, by exhibiting his almighty power in the creation and sustentation of the universe. There is obvious allusion to the history of the creation in Genesis. This is especially apparent in the closing words, *all their host*, which are borrowed from Gen. ii. 1. *Breath* is a poetical equivalent to *word*, and conveys still more strongly the idea of the ease with

which a God could make a world. At the same time, it is not a mere fortuitous coincidence, that these two words are used in Scripture to designate the second and third persons of the God-head. Compare Gen. i. 2. Job xxvii. 3. xxxiii. 4. Ps. civ 29, 30. Isai. xi. 4.

7. *Gathering as a heap the waters of the sea, putting in store houses the depths.* The participle represents it as an act still continued, and affording a perpetual evidence of God's almighty power, which is just as necessary now as on the first day of creation, to prevent the earth from being totally submerged.—*As a heap.* Dealing with fluids as if they were solids, with an obvious allusion to Ex. xv. 8. See also Josh. iii. 13, 16. Ps. lxxviii. 13.—*Putting*, literally, *giving*, storing, depositing.—*Depths*, masses of water. The main point of the description is God's handling these vast liquid masses, as men handle solid substances of moderate dimensions, heaping the waves up and storing them away, as men might do with stones or wheat.

8. *Let them be afraid of Jehovah—all the earth; let them stand in awe of him—all the dwellers in the world.* The position of the verbs at the beginning of the clauses adds greatly to the strength of the expression. The parallelism is exact, the terms being nearly synonymous. That the earth of the first clause means its rational inhabitants, is implied in the plural verb and expressed in the parallel clause. For the precise sense of the word translated *world*, see above, on Ps. xxiv. 1. The remoter inference suggested is that this omnipotent creator and preserver of the universe is able to protect his people and entitled to their confidence.

9. *For (it was) He (that) said (Be), and it was; (it was) He (that) commanded, and it stood.* The whole form of the

sentence here is modelled upon that of the cosmogony in *Genesis*, where these two verbs repeatedly alternate. The common version, *he spake and it was done*, is liable to three exceptions. The first is, that the emphatic pronoun of the Hebrew is not fairly represented; the second, that the phrase *it was done* is much less striking than *it was*; the third, that the Hebrew verb (אמר) does not mean to *spake* but to *say*. See above, on Ps. iv. 5 (4.) What was said, every reader could supply from recollection of the narrative in *Genesis*.—*Stood*, appeared, came into existence. Compare Ps. cxix. 90, 91.

10. *Jehovah has annulled the counsel of nations; he has frustrated the plans of the peoples.* What he has done he can do, although this is not explicitly affirmed. He who created and sustains the universe can frustrate, as he pleases, the designs of his own creatures, whether individuals or nations, from whom, therefore, his own people can have nothing to fear.

11. *The counsel of Jehovah to eternity shall stand; the thoughts of his heart to generation and generation.* This is the converse of the proposition. For the same reason that no purpose of his creatures can succeed against his will, no opposition of the creature can affect the execution of his own designs.—*Counsel*, plan, purpose.—*Thoughts of his heart*, conceptions or intentions of his mind.—*To generation and generation*, a common idiomatic phrase meaning one generation after another, or indefinitely, all generations.

12. *Happy the nation whose God (is) Jehovah, the people he hath chosen for a heritage for him.* This is the centre of the whole psalm, the conclusion from what goes before, and the text or theme of all that follows. Under the general proposition is included a particular felicitation of Israel as the actual choice and heritage of God, i. e. chosen to be his, in a



peculiar sense, by hereditary succession, through a course of ages.

13. *From heaven looked Jehovah; he saw all the sons of man* (or *Adam*.) He looked not at any one time merely, but at all times; he has always looked upon them since he first created them. As his omnipotence is constantly exerted to sustain them in existence, so his omniscience is continually exercised in the same inspection as at first.

14. *From the place of his dwelling he gazed at all the dwellers on the earth.* From his own residence without and above the earth, he has continued still to look intently upon its inhabitants. The verb is a poetical one, stronger than the ordinary *look*. See Song Sol. ii. 9. Isai. xiv. 16.

15. *The (God) forming all their hearts, the (God) attending to all their deeds.* The article agrees with the subject of the verb understood, and this construction it is necessary to retain, in order to connect the sentence as closely with the one before it as in the original. *Forming* implies *knowing*, which is more distinctly expressed, in reference to their outward conduct, in the other clause. God is also described as the creator of the human soul in Zech. xii. 1. Compare Num. xvi. 22. xxvii. 16. His control of it is expressly affirmed in reference to kings, Prov. xxi. 1.

16. *Not at all is the king saved by greatness of force; a mighty (man) shall not be freed by greatness of strength.* It shall not be, because it is not so, nor ever has been. The future therefore really includes a universal present. The negation is of course to be limited by what precedes, the saving power of mere human strength being only denied as it stands opposed to God or affects to be independent of him. The

Psalmist here begins a contrast between God's perfection and all created helps, considered as objects of confidence. *The king* is a generic term, describing a whole class, more strongly than our indefinite phrase, *a king*.

17. *A lie (is) the horse for salvation, and by the greatness of his strength he shall not deliver.* This is a mere specification of the general statement in the sixteenth verse. The *horse* meant is the war-horse, and is singled out as one of the elements of military strength in which the ancients were especially disposed to trust. See above, on Ps. xx. 8 (7), and compare Isai. xxxi. 1—3. *A lie*, a falsehood, i.e. something which deceives and disappoints the confidence reposed in it. The deliverance and salvation here referred to are deliverance and salvation from the perils of war.

18. *Lo, the eye of Jehovah (is) towards his fearers, to those waiting for his mercy.* While the material strength of other men fails to secure them, those who fear the Lord and hope in his mercy, are secure beneath his vigilant inspection. That this is intended for their good, is more distinctly stated in the next verse.

19. *To deliver from death their soul, and to keep them alive in the famine.* The sentence is continued from the foregoing verse. His eye is towards them for the very purpose of interposing when he sees it to be necessary, for the rescue of *their soul*, their life, *from death* in general, to which is added one specific form of danger, well known to the ancient Hebrews. *The famine* is a similar expression to *the king* in v. 16, and to our common phrase *the pestilence*, when used in a generic sense, and not in reference to any particular disease or visitation.

20. *Our soul has hoped (or waited) for Jehovah; our help*

*and our shield (is) He.* In the remainder of the Psalm, the people of God express their trust in him and pray that he will deal with them according to their faith. The preterite expresses a habit already formed and fixed, and therefore really including a description of the present. In the terms of this verse there appears to be a reference to the language of the Pentateuch in several places. See Gen. xv. 1. xlix. 18. Dent. xxxviii. 29. The figure of a shield occurs above, in Ps. iii. 4 (3.) xviii. 3, 31, 36 (2, 30, 35.) The position of the pronoun is emphatic and significant. Our safety and protection are in Him and Him alone.

21. *For in him shall our heart rejoice, for in his holy name have we trusted.* The consecution of the tenses is not unmeaning or fortuitous. The Psalmist's assurance of the future is derived from the possession of a faith already tried and proved to be truly in existence. It is because he has trusted, that he knows he shall rejoice. The exchange of both these tenses for a present is at once enfeebling to the sense and ungrammatical.—*His holy name*, in the wide sense which the epithet so often has in this book, nearly corresponding to *his glorious, his divine name*. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3.) To trust in this name is to build one's hopes on the manifestation of God's attributes in previous acts; to believe that what he has heretofore shown himself to be, he will be still in the experience of his people.

22. *Be thy mercy, Jehovah, upon us, as we have waited for thee.* The faith implied in this hope being the sole condition of God's mercy, its possession constitutes a claim upon that mercy, which is here urged as the sum of all the previous petitions. What is thus waited for cannot but be realized. A merciful and righteous God cannot, without denial of himself, withhold that which his people thus expect. Any appearance

of a meritorious claim is excluded by the doctrine sufficiently implied here and abundantly taught elsewhere, that the condition is as much the gift of God as that which is suspended on it. The claim in reality amounts to a petition that as God had given the desire he would fulfill it.—As, according as, not merely since, because, but in proportion to our faith, so deal with us. Compare Matt. ix. 29.

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### PSALM XXXIV.

AFTER the title containing the historical occasion, v. 1, the Psalmist expresses his determination to praise God for his goodness as experienced already, vs. 2, 3, (1, 2), and invites others to unite with him in so doing, v. 4 (3.) He then briefly states his own experience, v. 5—7 (4—6), and founds upon it the general doctrine of God's care for his own people, vs. 8—11 (7—10.) Assuming then the tone of an instructor, he lays down rules for the securing of this great advantage, vs. 12—15 (11—14), and contrasts, in the remainder of the psalm, the safety of the righteous, even when afflicted, with the certain ruin of the wicked, vs. 16—23 (15—22.)

The Psalm is so evidently a didactic one, or *maschil*, that an express designation of this character was not required. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1.

As to its form, this is the second instance of an alphabetical psalm, approaching very nearly to perfect regularity, the only letter omitted being  $\gamma$ . It is very remarkable that here, as in Ps. xxv, the last verse begins with  $\eta$ , like v. 16, and seems to be added to the alphabetic series.

1. *By David, in (the time of) his changing (disguising) his reason before Abimelech, and he drove him away, and he went.* The incident referred to is recorded in 1 Sam. xxi. David, having fled from Saul into the land of the Philistines, was brought into the presence of Achish king of Gath, from whom he had reason to expect retaliation for injuries formerly received, and therefore pretended to be mad, an expedient which, in spite of its dubious morality, it pleased God to allow to be successful. In grateful recollection of this undeserved deliverance, not without some compunction with respect to the means by which he had secured it, David seems, at a later period of his life, to have composed this psalm for popular instruction, to which it is peculiarly adapted by its clearness and simplicity, as well as by its alphabetic form, which is a valuable aid to the memory.—*In his changing* does not necessarily designate the date of composition, but only that of the event which gave occasion to it. The common version, *behaviour*, is inconsistent with the usage of the Hebrew word, which means taste, judgment, understanding, reason.—*Abimelech*, king's father, hereditary sovereign, was the traditional title of the king. See Gen. xx. 2. xxvi. 1. His personal name was Achish, 1 Sam. xxi. 10, 11, 12, 14.

2 (1.) *I will bless Jehovah at every time : always his praise (shall be) in my mouth.* The promise of unceasing praise suggests the idea of extraordinary benefits to call it forth.—*In all time*, in every variety of situation, even the most discouraging, he is resolved to bear in mind what God has done for him in times past.

3 (2.) *In Jehovah shall glory my soul ; the humble shall hear and rejoice.* The first verb is strictly a reflective form, and means to *praise one's self*, i. e. to *boast*, or, as denoting a more permanent affection of the mind, to *glory*, i. e. to exult in the possession and enjoyment of some admired and beloved

object. The act of glorying is ascribed to the soul, in order to describe it as done cordially, *ex animo*.—*The humble*, as opposed to the proud and the presumptuous, is a general description of God's people, who are naturally interested in the good experienced by the Psalmist, both for his sake and their own. See above, on Ps. xxii. 27 (26.) xxv. 9.

4 (3.) *Magnify (praise) to Jehovah with me, and let us exalt his name together.* In Ps. lxix. 31 (30), the verb to *magnify* is construed directly with its object, but in this case with a dative, *to Jehovah*, which may either be regarded as a poetical equivalent to the accusative, or connected with the noun *praise* understood, or with *name*, supplied from the other clause.

5 (4.) *I sought Jehovah, and he answered me, and from all my fears delivered me.* He here begins to assign a reason why he and others should praise God. He had delivered him from all his fears by removing the occasions of them. The same plural form occurs, Isai. lxvi. 4.

6 (5.) *They looked unto him and brightened, and let not their faces blush.* The plural *they* refers to the whole class of which the Psalmist was the representative.—*Brightened*, or as we say in English, *brightened up*, is a natural expression of relief and renewed cheerfulness. In the last clause the optative form is substituted for that of simple affirmation, so as to increase the emphasis. The wish, *let not their faces blush*, implies that there is danger of their doing so, and need of divine grace to prevent it.

7 (6.) *This sufferer called, and Jehovah heard, and from all his distresses saved him.* From the general expressions of the preceding verse he now recurs to his own case in particular. *This sufferer*, or afflicted one, meaning himself, as we say in



modern phrase, the speaker or the writer, as a periphrasis for the personal pronoun.

8 (7.) *Encamping* (is) *the angel of Jehovah round about his fearers—and (now) he has rescued them.* The angel, not only in the collective sense of angels, but in its specific sense, as denoting the Angel of the Lord by way of eminence, the angel of the covenant and of the divine presence (Isai. lxiii. 9), in whom the manifestation of the Godhead took place under the Old Testament. As this angel was the captain of the Lord's host (Jos. v. 14. 1 Kings xxii. 19), his presence implies that of many others, and the word *encamp* is therefore perfectly appropriate. The conversive future represents the act denoted by the last verb as consequent upon the other. This grammatical relation can only be imperfectly expressed in a translation, though the general idea is sufficiently clear.

9 (8.) *Taste ye and see, that Jehovah is good; happy the man who will trust in him.* The only proof is furnished by experience. The exhortation seems to imply that the provision is already made and only waiting for the guests. Compare Luke xiv. 17, and see above, on Ps. ii. 12.

10. (9) *Fear Jehovah, ye his saints, for there is no want to his fearers.* The fear of God is here put, as in several other places, for the whole of piety or genuine religion, which must ever rest upon the basis of profound awe and veneration. See Ps. ii. 11. Prov. i. 7. ix. 10. *His saints*, those set apart and consecrated to his service, and as such bound to be holy in the strict sense. See above, on Ps. xvi. 3. The last clause represents this as no less the interest than the duty of God's people. They are called upon to fear him, not only because fear is due to him, but because it is the surest method of securing their own safety and supplying their own wants.

11 (10.) *Young lions have lacked and hungered, and the seekers of Jehovah shall not want all (or any) good.* The first verb properly means *grown poor* or become impoverished, and is therefore strictly applicable only to a human subject, a sufficient proof that such a subject is really referred to here under the figure of a lion, which is frequently used elsewhere to denote men of strength and violence. See Job iv. 10, 11, and compare Ps. lvii. 5 (4.) Nah. ii. 12—14 (11—13). Ez. xix. 2, 3. xxxviii. 13. The sentiment then is, that while the most powerful and least scrupulous of men may be reduced to want, the people of God shall be abundantly and constantly provided for. The contrast is analogous to that presented in Isai. xl. 30, 31.

12 (11.) *Come, sons, hearken to me ; the fear of Jehovah I will teach you.* As one experienced in the ways of God, he now addresses those less enlightened, and invites them to avail themselves of his instructions. *Sons* or *children* is a natural and common designation of the pupil as related to the teacher. Compare Prov. i. 8, 10, 15. To teach men the fear of the Lord is to teach them how and why they should fear him. And accordingly we find in the ensuing verses a practical argument in favour of true piety derived from its beneficent effects on those who cherish it and practice it.

13 (12.) *Who (is) the man, the (one) desiring life, loving days (in which) to see good?* The interrogation is equivalent to saying, *whosoever desires life*, i. e. desires to live, not in the sense of mere existence but of genuine enjoyment, which is distinctly expressed in the last clause by the words *loving days*, i. e. desiring many days or long life, not for its own sake, but as a time of happiness. Whoever does desire this—and the wish must of course be universal—let him observe the following precepts. *To see good* is to know it by experience, to possess it and enjoy it. See above, on Ps. iv. 7 (6.)

14 (13.) *Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile.* The man who was inquired for in v. 13 (12) is here directly addressed. Whoever thou art, if thou desire thus to live, *keep*, watch, guard, *thy tongue from speaking evil*, a comprehensive phrase, for which the last clause substitutes one more specific, namely, *speaking guile*, uttering deceit, or lying. The stress here laid upon this sin is so remarkable, when viewed in connexion with the means by which David escaped from Achish, as suggested in the title, that it can only be explained by supposing that he looked on the success of his deception as a most unmerited forbearance upon God's part, which, far from recommending the same course in other cases, made it incumbent on the Psalmist to dissuade others from it.

15 (14.) *Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* Not only in relation to this one sin, but to all, if thou desire to enjoy life, *depart from evil*, break off the practice and abjure the love of it; and since this is neither practicable nor sufficient as a mere negation, effect it by a positive performance of its opposite, *do good*. Compare the exhortation in Isai. i 16, 17, *Cease to do evil, learn to do good*. The last clause may be explained as a return from generals to particulars, hostility and hatred being singled out as falsehood and deceit were in the preceding verse. Compare Rom. xii. 18. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Or *peace* may be understood as comprehending peace with God and the enjoyment of his favour.—In either of these senses, or in both, if thou desire to enjoy life, *seek peace*, not in an indolent and listless manner, but *pursue it*, chase it, hunt for it, and eagerly endeavour to attain it. The command implies that the object is both worthy of pursuit and liable to be lost.

16 (15.) *The eyes of Jehovah (are) towards the righteous, and his ears towards their cry.* The inducement to comply with the foregoing precepts is that God will protect his servants

from those dangers against which neither violence nor craft can secure them. They have no need either to speak guile or break the peace, in order to be safe from injury. Another watches over them, whose vigilance cannot be eluded or exhausted. *The eyes of the Lord are to the righteous*, i. e. open to them, or turned towards them, so that he continually sees their true condition, and *his ears* are directed *to their cry*, or open to receive it. This, without a figure, means, that he is constantly apprized of their necessities and ready to receive their prayers, in which assurance that of safety and abundance is fully comprehended.

17 (16.) *The face of Jehovah (is) with evil-doers, to destroy from the earth their memory.* The same unsleeping vigilance is exercised towards others also, but for a very different purpose. *The face of the Lord is with evil-doers*, i. e. visible or present to them, no less than to good men. The preposition before *evil-doers* is not the same that occurs twice in the verse preceding, and which properly denotes direction, but another meaning *in* or *with*. The unfavourable sense, *against*, which it may seem to have both here and elsewhere (e. g. Jer. xxi. 10, xliv. 11) is suggested by the context. In all these cases some interpreters suppose the sense to be that the eyes or face of God penetrate, as it were, and rest in the object.—The design with which Jehovah watches evil-doers is not to interpose for their deliverance or relief, but *to destroy from the earth their very memory*, a strong expression for entire extirpation. Compare Ex. xvii. 14. Deut. xxv. 19. Isaiah xxvi. 14, and see above, on Ps. ix. 6, 7 (5, 6.)

18 (19.) *They cried and Jehovah heard, and from all their distresses delivered them.* This may at first sight seem to have respect to the evil-doers of the preceding verse, who are then represented as obtaining relief from deserved judgments by

h... a prayer to God But as the wicked are, in this whole passage, mentioned only incidentally, and as a kind of foil or contrast to the righteous, it seems better, on the whole, to make the first verb here indefinite, *men cry for help*, but with special reference to the righteous of v. 16 (15.) God watches over the righteous to protect them—as he does over the wicked to destroy them—and whenever they cry to him for help, he saves them. This parenthetical construction of v. 17 (16) is the more admissible because it contains no finite verb, whereas v. 18 (17) contains three.

19 (18.) *Near (is) Jehovah to the broken in heart, and the crushed in spirit he will save.* These figurative terms are always used in a good sense and applied to humble penitents. See Ps. li. 19 (17). Isai. lvii. 15. lxi. 1. lxvi. 2. They are descriptive of the contrition wrought by divine grace in the hearts of sinners. To such the Lord is always *near*, i. e. ready to deliver and protect. See above, on Ps. xxii. 12 (11.)

20 (19) *Many evils (befall) the righteous, and from them all will Jehovah deliver him.* The preceding promise might have seemed to imply exemption from all suffering; but this can only be enjoyed in connexion with exemption from all sin. While sin continues to exist, sorrow must coexist with it, even in the case of true believers or the righteous, who are never described in this book as absolutely sinless. See above, Ps. xix. 13 (12.) xxv. 7. While the sufferings of the righteous show them to be sinners, their deliverance illustrates the divine compassion. The relation of the clauses would in our idiom require a *but* instead of the simple copulative, which the Hebrew writers commonly employ in such connexions.

21 (20.) *Keeping all his bones—not one of them is broken.* The sentence may be completed by supplying the substantive verb: (*he is*) *keeping*, i. e. habitually keeps; but it is simpler

and better to regard this and the verse before it as one sentence, and the participle as agreeing regularly with *Jehovah*.—*Keeping*, in the pregnant sense of watching and preserving.—*His bones*, his frame, his body. See above, Ps. xxxii. 3, and below, Ps. xxxv. 10.—The literal translation of the last clause, *one of them is not broken*, would be equivocal in English. The original expression occurs also in Isai. xxxiv. 16. The doctrine or promise of this verse is analogous to that in Matt. x. 30.

22 (21.) *Evil shall slay the wicked, and the haters of the righteous shall be guilty*. While the sufferings of which the righteous man is a partaker are but temporary, those of the wicked shall be ultimately fatal. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 10. *Evil* must have the same sense in both cases, namely, that of physical evil, suffering or misfortune. The result here described is not fortuitous, but brought about by moral causes. They must be destroyed because they are found *guilty*, i. e. of rebellion against God, one conclusive proof of which is afforded by their hatred of his people. They *shall be guilty*, i. e. recognised and known as such and treated accordingly. ‘The sufferings of the wicked man, unlike those of the righteous, tend to death, because the hatred of the former to the latter proves himself to be worthy of destruction.’

23 (22.) *Jehovah redeems the soul of his servants, and guilty shall none be (of) those trusting in him*. The precise form of the first clause in Hebrew is: *Jehovah redeeming the soul of his servants*, which seems to mean that he is doing so now, and that he habitually does so. The soul or vital principle is named because the case was one of life and death. None of those trusting in him shall be recognised and treated as guilty the opposite of that which had been just asserted of the wicked. The condition and ground of this immunity is faith or trust in God, without which, according to the doctrine of both testaments, there can be no escape from guilt or punishment.



## PSALM XXXV.

WE have here another of those psalms, in which two great parties, the righteous and the wicked, are exhibited in contrast and in an attitude of mutual hostility. The psalm may be divided into three parts, parallel to one another, in all of which the elements combined are complaint, prayer, and the promise of thanksgiving for anticipated deliverance. The first division is occupied with an invocation of divine judgments on God's enemies, ending with an expression of triumph in God's favour, vs. 1—9. The second contains a more particular description of these enemies, as oppressors, false accusers, unthankful renderers of evil for good, and malignant scoffers, with a prayer for the divine interposition, and a pledge of public thanksgiving, vs. 10—18. The third renews briefly the description of the enemy, but is chiefly filled with prayer to be delivered from them, and closes, like the others, with a promise of perpetual thanksgiving, vs. 19—28.

1. *By David. Oppose, Jehovah, my opposers ; devour my devourers.* The correctness of the title is confirmed by the appearance of allusion to 1 Sam. xxiv. 16 (15,) the incident recorded in which place may have been present to the Psalmist's mind, although we have no reason to believe that he wrote it with exclusive reference to that time or to himself, but for the use of pious sufferers in general.—*Strive with my strivers, or contend with my contenders.* The original verb is one specifically used to denote judicial contest, litigation, in which sense a cog-

nate noun is used below, v. 23, and the English Bible thus translates the verse before us: *plead (my cause) with them that strive against me; fight against them that fight against me.* It is only in the passive form, however, that *לָחַם* means to fight; its primary sense is to devour. The application of this metaphor to warfare is not uncommon. See below, Ps. lvi. 2, 3 (1, 2), and compare Num. xiv. 9. xxiv. 8. Deut. vii. 16.

2. *Lay hold of shield and buckler, and stand up in my defence (or for my help.)* The manifestation of God's saving and protecting power is described in Scripture under various figures corresponding to the form of the particular suffering or danger. Against injustice he appears as an advocate or judge (see v. 23 below); against violence as a warrior (see Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.) In this character the Psalmist here entreats him to appear, and for that end to *seize*, grasp, or lay hold of his weapons of defence. The *shield* and *buckler* seem to have been different in size (1 Kings x. 16, 17), though not in use.—*Arise*, address thyself to action. See above, on Ps. iii. 8 (7).—*In my help* is by some explained to mean *as my help* i. e. *my helper*; but the Hebrew idiom seems to be identical with our phrase *in my defence*.

3. *And draw out the spear, and stop (the way) against my pursuers; say to my soul, Thy salvation (am) I.* The first verb properly means *empty*, *pour out*, and then *draw out*. Some suppose the expression to be strictly applicable only to the sword, but to be here applied by a kind of poetic licence to the spear. Others suppose it to be strictly used, but in relation to the drawing of it out of its repository or concealment. Some explain *סָגַר* as a foreign word, identical with the Scythian *σάραγίς* or battle-axe. But no such word occurs in Hebrew elsewhere, and the meaning of the verb *סָגַר* is entirely appropriate, to *close* or stop the way against another. *Against*,

or literally *to mee*, in a hostile or military sense which the word has in Deut. i. 44, Josh. viii. 14, and elsewhere.—*To my soul*; see above, on Ps. xi. 1.—*Thy salvation*, see below, Ps. xxxviii. 23 (22.)

4. *Shamed and confounded be the seekers of my soul ; turned back and made to blush the devisers of my hurt.* Entirely disappointed in their hopes and efforts. The optative meaning of the futures is determined by the unambiguous form יִהְיֶה in v. 6 below. *The seekers of my soul* or *life*, i. e. such as seek it to destroy it. Compare Matt. ii. 13, 20. *Turned back*, disgracefully repulsed and defeated. See above, on Ps. ix. 18 (17.) *Made to blush*: the form of the verb in Hebrew is not causative, but simply means to blush or be confused. The causative form is here employed in order to give uniformity to the English sentence.—*My hurt*, literally, *my evil*, i. e. evil fortune, calamity, or injury.—*Devisers*, literally, *thinkers*, i. e. such as meditate or purpose my destruction

5. *Let them be as chaff before a wind, and the angel of Jehovah smiting.* Under the influence of inspiration, the Psalmist sees the natural and righteous consequences of their wickedness, and viewing the case merely in itself, apart from personal feeling, speaks of this effect as desirable. The wish expressed is, to all intents and purposes, equivalent to a prediction or the affirmation of a general truth. The Psalmist desires the destruction of these sinners precisely as God wills it; nor is it any harder to reconcile such wishes with the highest degree of human goodness than it is to reconcile the certain fact that God allows some men to perish with his infinite benevolence. The figure of *chaff before the wind* suggests the idea of intrinsic worthlessness with that of easy and complete destruction. Compare Ps. i. 4. The participle at the close means *striking (them) down*, so that they cannot rise. Compare Ps. xxxvi

13 (12.) 'The *angel of Jehovah*, his appointed instrument of vengeance. See above, on Ps. xxxiv. 8 (7.)

6. *Let their way be dark and slippery and the angel of Jehovah chasing them.* The optative form of the verb at the beginning determines the sense of those which go before, and which otherwise might be ambiguous.—*Dark and slippery*, literally, *darkness and smoothnesses*, an emphatic substitution of the abstract for the concrete. The fearful image thus suggested of men driven, like chaff before the wind, along a dark and slippery path, is rendered more terrific by the additional idea of their being hotly pursued by the destroying angel. The construction of the last clause, both in this verse and the one before it, is: (let) the angel of Jehovah (be) pursuing them.

7. *For without cause they hid for me their pit-fall; without cause they digged for my soul.* This verse assigns the reason of the imprecations or denunciations which precede.—*Without cause*, wantonly, gratuitously, unprovoked, and therefore prompted by mere malice. See below, v. 19.—*The pit of their net* is an idiomatic phrase like *the hill of my holiness*. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. The true sense of the phrase appears to be *their net-pit*, i. e. their pit covered with a net, a figure borrowed from the ancient modes of hunting. See above, on Ps. vii. 16 (15.) ix. 16 (15.) In the last clause we may either supply a relative, as in the common version, *which they digged*, or take the verb in the absolute sense of making a pit or ditch.

8. *Let ruin come (upon) him (when) he does not know; and his net which he hid—let it take him—with ruin (to his ruin) let him fall into it.* The first noun properly denotes a *crash*, as of a falling house, and then a *ruin*, both in the narrower and wider sense. *When he does not know*, unawares, unexpectedly, as in Isai. xlvii. 11. Job ix. 5. The last clause may also be

translated, *into ruin let him fall into it*, i. e. as the common version has it, *into that very ruin*. But it is simpler to let חָשַׁח qualify the verb; let him fall with ruin, i. e. ruinously, to his own destruction.

9. *And my soul shall exult in Jehovah, shall joy in his salvation.* Our idiom would require *so* or *then* at the beginning of the sentence, to make the connexion of the verses clear.—*In Jehovah*, not merely on account of him, but in union with him and possession of him, as the parallel phrase, *in his salvation*, means in the experience and enjoyment of it. This is a kind of promise that the favour asked shall not be unrequited by thanksgiving, and the same idea is still further carried out in the next verse.

10. *All my bones shall say, Jehovah, who is like thee, delivering the sufferer from (one) stronger than himself, and the sufferer and the needy from his spoiler?* The bones, the frame, the person, are here put for the whole man. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 3. The interrogative form implies negation. 'There is no such saviour besides God.' The apparent tautology may be relieved in English by translating *even the sufferer, &c.* But such repetitions are entirely congenial to the Hebrew idiom. With the second clause compare Jer. xxxi. 11 and with the third Ps. x. 2.

11. *There rise up witnesses of violence; (as to) that which I have not known they ask me.* The future verbs describe the acts as still in progress, and as likely to be long continued. *They are rising* or *about to rise, asking* or *about to ask*. The word translated *violence* is one of very frequent occurrence in the Psalms and includes the ideas of injustice and cruelty. See above, on Ps. vii. 17 (16.) xi. 5. xviii. 49 (48.) xxv. 19. xxvii. 12. 'They endeavour to draw from me the acknowledgment of

crimes which I have not committed, and of which I have no knowledge.'

12. *They repay me evil for good—bereavement to my soul.* 'If given up to them, I have nothing to expect but a continued recompense of evil for good, extending even to the loss of what is most essential to my being and well-being.' The word translated *bereavement* commonly means loss of children, but is here used metaphorically for the most extreme and lamentable destitution.

13. *And I—in their sickness my clothing (was) sackcloth; I humbled with fasting my soul—and my prayer into my bosom shall return.* The general idea is that he displayed the deepest sympathy with their distresses. This idea is expressed by figures borrowed from the oriental mourning usages. Sackcloth, fasting, and prayer are here particularly mentioned. To *humble the soul* (or *one's self*), or as some explain it to *mortify the appetite*, is the phrase by which fasting is described in the Law of Moses (Lev. xvi. 31, xxiii, 27, 32. Num. xxix. 7), and which is here combined with the later word צַדִּיק.—The last clause is obscure and is by some understood to signify the constancy of supplication, coming back and going out again without cessation. Others explain it as a mere description of the attitude of prayer with the head bowed upon the bosom, as if he had said, I was continually pouring prayer into my bosom. But neither of these explanations is so probable as the traditional one of the Jews, according to which he desires that the prayer which he offered for them might redound to his own advantage. Or the clause may be still more simply construed as a prediction: 'my prayer shall not be lost, it shall return in blessings to the heart which prompted it.'

14. *As (if it had been) a friend, a brother to me, I went on*



(or *went about*); as a mourner for a mother, *squalid I bowed down*. He not only mourned in their calamity, but with the deepest grief, as for a friend, a brother, or a parent, which terms are so arranged as to produce a beautiful and striking climax.—The verb in the first clause corresponds very nearly to the familiar English phrase *went on*, in the sense of lived or habitually acted. See above, on Ps. i. 1.—The Hebrew word קָטַר means *squalid*, dirty, in allusion to the ancient oriental practice of neglecting the appearance, and even covering the dress and person with dust and ashes, as a token of extreme grief. The bowing down is also to be taken as a part of the same usage.

15. *And (yet) in my limping they rejoiced, and were gathered together; there were gathered together against me cripples, and I did not know (it); they did tear and were not silent.* With his behaviour to them in their affliction he contrasts theirs to him. As disease in general is a common figure for distress, so lameness in particular is so used here and in Ps. xxxviii. 18 (17.) Jer. xx. 10. They assembled not to comfort but to mock him and revile him.—The obscure word נָקִיִּים has been variously explained to mean *smilers* with the tongue (Jer. xviii. 18), i. e. slanderers—*whipped* (Job xxx. 8), i. e. degraded criminals—and *smitten* (Isai. liii. 4), i. e. afflicted. But Luther's explanation, which connects the word with the cognate form נָכָה רַגְלָיִם (2 Sam. iv. 4. ix. 3) *smitten in the feet*, lame, crippled, not only yields a good sense, but agrees best with the figure of the first clause. 'When I limped cripples mocked at me'—i. e. those who were themselves contemptible treated me with contempt. *I did not know it.* It was done behind my back, and while I was entirely unsuspecting. See above, on v. 8. This is a more natural construction than *whom I did not know*, which is moreover inconsistent with what goes before—*They rent or tore me by their slanders*

16. *With worthless mockers for bread—gnashing against me their teeth.* This they did in the company of impious, reprobate, or worthless scoffers, who calumniate others for the sake of gaining favour with their wicked patrons. Hence they are called *bread* or *cake-scoffers*, those who earn their food by spiteful mockery of others. The form of the whole verse is extremely idiomatic and scarcely admits of an exact translation. The literal meaning of the first clause is *with the worthless of mockers of bread*, and in the second the verb *gnash* is an infinitive, which can only be rendered in intelligible English by a participle or a finite verb, *they gnashed*, or *gnashing*. This is always expressive of malignant rage and shows that what is here described is not mere raillery but spiteful defamation.

17. *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Restore my soul from their ruins (or ruinous plots), from the young lions my lonely one.* The first Hebrew word is not *Jehovah* but *Adhonai*, properly expressive of dominion or sovereignty. See above, on Ps. xvi. 2—*How long?* The Hebrew phrase usually means *how much*, but is here specially applied to time; *how much time? how long?* *Wilt thou see* what treatment I receive, and merely see it, as an indifferent spectator?—*Restore my soul* has not the same sense as in Ps. xix. 8 (7). xxiii. 3, but the strict one of *bringing back* from the dangerous extreme to which he had been brought by the *ruins* or *ruinous devices*—i. e. designed to ruin others—of his enemies. Lions are mentioned as the strongest and fiercest of wild beasts, and young lions as the most active of their species. See above, on Ps. xxxiv. 11 (10.)—*My lonely, solitary, soul.* See above, on Ps. xxii. 21 (20.)

18. *I will thank thee in the great assembly, in (the midst of the) mighty people I will praise thee.* On the supposition that his prayer will be heard and answered, he engages to give

public thanks, *in the great congregation* or assembly of God's people. See above, on Ps. xxii. 23, 26 (22, 25).—*Strong people*, strong in numbers, a poetical equivalent to *great congregation*.—The verb in the last clause means to *praise* in general; that in the first to praise for benefits received, to acknowledge favour, in other words to *thank*. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 2.

19. *Let them not rejoice respecting me, my enemies of falsehood, (and let not) my haters without cause wink the eye.* Respecting me, at my expense, or, in this and similar connexions, *over me*, although this idea is not so much expressed in the text as suggested by the context. See above, Ps. xxv. 2, and below, v. 24. Ps. xxxviii. 17 (16.) *Let them not rejoice*, let them have no occasion so to do.—*My enemies of falsehood*, my false enemies, who gratify their spite by calumny and slander.—*My haters without cause*, those who hate me gratuitously, out of sheer spite, without any reasonable ground or even colourable pretext. This is a favourite description of the enemies of the righteous—see above, on Ps. vii. 5 (4.) xxv. 3—and was pre-eminently true of the enemies of Christ, to whom it is applied in the New Testament (John xv. 25.) The negation of the first clause is to be repeated in the other, as in Ps. ix. 19 (18.) Winking is here referred to as a gesture of mutual congratulation among accomplices in guilt. Compare Prov. vi. 13. x. 10.

20. *For not peace will they speak, and against the quiet of the land words of deceits will they devise.* The *for* assigns a reason why they ought not to be suffered to rejoice in the success of their designs. The reason is, because their designs are evil, tending not to *peace*—in the strict sense, as opposed to strife, or in the wide sense, as opposed to trouble and calamity—but to the disturbance of those who are peacefully inclined, *the quiet (or tranquil) of the land*, i. e. the land of promise, con-

sidered as the home of God's chosen people, who, as its rightful proprietors, are characteristically peaceful and averse from all strife and disorder. Compare Matt. v. 5. To disturb these, the wicked devise *words of deceits*, in which phrase *words* is not an idiomatic pleonasm,—compare xli. 9 (8.) lxxv. 4 (3),—but a substantive expression, meaning *false* (or *lying*) *words*, and more specifically slanders—see below, Ps. xxxvi. 4 (3)—the utterers of which are called *lying enemies* in v. 19. The futures of this verse include the present: they do so now and will do so still. Some connect *not peace* as an emphatic compound, meaning just the opposite of peace. Compare Isai. x. 15.

21. *And have widened against me their mouth; they have said, Aha, aha, our eye has seen.* 'They have mocked at my distress with contemptuous grimaces, and rejoiced in the fulfilment of their spiteful wishes.' With the first clause compare Ps. xxii. 8 (7) above. The Hebrew interjection in the last clause (אָהָה) seems to be a natural expression of joyful surprise. Their success was almost too great to be real, yet attested by their senses. The verse ends with a kind of aposiopesis: 'our own eyes have seen'—what we could not have believed on the report of another, to wit, the gratification of our warmest wishes. See below, v. 25.

22. *Thou hast seen, Jehovah, be not silent; Lord be not far from me.* 'But they are not the only witnesses of my distress for thou, Lord, likewise seest and hast long seen it. Seeing it, therefore, be no longer silent; refrain no longer from interposing in my favour; speak in my behalf; be near me in this time of peril.' The connexion of the verses is like that in Ps. x. 13, 14, and the prayer in the last clause not unlike that with which the same psalm opens. With the other petition *be not silent*, compare that at the beginning of Ps. xxviii, and with the first words, *thou hast seen*, those of v. 17 above.

23. *Arouse (thee) and awake for my right (or judgment) my God and my Lord for my cause.* 'Put an end to this inaction and apparent indifference, and manifest thy presence, as my sovereign and my covenant keeping God, for the vindication of my innocence against false accusers and unrighteous judges.' The same petition, clothed in nearly the same words, occurs above in Ps. vii. 7, 9 (6, 8). See also Ps. ix. 5 (4.) xvii.

24. *Judge me according to thy righteousness, Jehovah, my God, and let them not rejoice respecting me.* 'Do me justice, clear me from aspersion, grant an attestation of my innocence, in the exercise and exhibition of thine own essential rectitude, and in accordance with that covenant relation which exists between us; and thus, in the most effectual manner, take away from my malignant enemies all pretext and occasion for exulting in my overthrow, or otherwise triumphing at my expense.' With the last clause compare Ps. xxx. 2 (1) above, where he thanks God for the very favour which he here asks. The verb in this clause may be referred to men in general, or with still greater probability to the enemies described in the preceding context.

25. *Let them not say in their heart, Aha, our soul (or our heart's desire)!* *Let them not say, We have swallowed him up!* *In their heart*, not secretly, but cordially, not as opposed to saying so to others, but to mere profession.—*Our heart's desire!* an abbreviated exclamation prompted by strong feeling. 'This is precisely what we have so long and so intensely wished for!' See above, on Ps. xxvii. 12. *Let them not say*, let them not have occasion so to say; let not the events which befall me justify them in so saying.—*Swallowed him up*, utterly destroyed him. See above, on Ps. xxi. 10 (9), and compare Lam. ii. 16, where the form of expression is no doubt copied from the verse before us.

26. *Let them be ashamed and blush together—the rejoicers in my evil; let them put on shame and contempt the (men) magnifying against me* (their words, or their deeds, or themselves)! The relative construction, *who rejoice in my hurt who magnify against me*, gives the sense, but in an English rather than a Hebrew form.—*Ashamed*, disappointed and defeated. See above, on v. 4.—*Blush*, be confused or confounded.—*My evil*, i. e. evil fortune, injury, including the idea of injustice, as the antithetical term in v. 27, is *righteousness* or justification.—*Put on*, as a dress, and wear it, or be covered with it. See below, on Ps. cix. 18 (17), and compare Job. viii. 22.—*Contempt*, disgrace, ignominy.—*Making great*, &c. their mouth or words, i. e. speaking proudly, Ob. 12. Ezek. xxxv. 13; or still more probably and agreeably to usage, *acting proudly*, as in Ps. lv. 13 (12), and elsewhere. The complete expression may be that used in Joel ii. 20.

27. *Let them shout (or sing) and rejoice—the desirers of my righteousness—and let them always say, Great is (or be) Jehovah, the (God) willing (or desiring) the peace of his servant!* The sentence may be brought into closer conformity to our idiom by adopting a relative construction. ‘Let them rejoice who desire my righteousness,’ i. e. my justification, who desire to see me practically justified by God’s providential dealings with me.—*Let them always say*, i. e. always have occasion so to do, which is virtually wishing that the peace or prosperity of Jehovah’s servant may be perpetual. The verbal adjective in both these clauses means *desiring*, with a strong implication of complacency or satisfaction in the object, and therefore really includes the two ideas of *desire* and *delight*.—The *righteousness* or *justification* of the first clause is an obvious antithesis to the *evil*, *hurt*, or *injury* of v. 26, and no less obviously identical, or at least coincident, with the *peace* or *welfare* of the last clause here.



28. *And my tongue shall utter thy righteousness— all the day (long) thy praise.* The *and* connects the verse with what precedes, as the effect with its occasion or its cause. This connexion may be made clear in our idiom by the use of a more definite particle, such as *then* or *so*.—The verb used in this verse is applied elsewhere both to articulate and inarticulate animal sounds. The nearest equivalent in English is to *utter*. For a secondary or derived sense of the same verb, see above, on Ps. i. 2.—*All the day long* or *every day*, common expressions for continually, always.—The *righteousness* of the first clause is the object of the *praise* in the second. The righteousness of God here mentioned has reference to the Psalmist's righteousness in v. 27. By vindicating this, the divine justice or fidelity acquires, as it were, a new claim to the praises of the justified sinner, which he here declares himself resolved to pay.

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## PSALM XXXVI.

THIS remarkable psalm consists of three distinguishable parts, besides the title, v. 1. The first contains a strong description of human depravity, vs. 2—5 (1—4.) The second contrasts with this the divine excellence, vs. 6—10 (5—9.) In the third, the Psalmist prays to be delivered from the first and made a partaker of the second, with a strong assurance that his desire will be fulfilled, vs. 11—13 (10—12.)

The first part differs from the rest, in form as well as substance, being much more obscure and difficult.

1. *To the Chief Musician. By a Servant of Jehovah. By*

*David.* This peculiar collocation of the words, which occurs only here and in the title of the eighteenth psalm, seems to imply something more than would have been conveyed by the description, *David a servant of Jehovah.* The difference intended may be this, that *servant of Jehovah* is not added to the name as a descriptive epithet, but is itself the salient point of the inscription, the name being added merely to identify the person. This would seem to show that, for some reason founded in the psalm itself, it is important that it be regarded as the work of a servant of Jehovah, one inspired by him, perhaps in opposition to the inspiration of depravity referred to in the next verse.

2 (1.) *Thus saith depravity to the wicked (one) in the midst of my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.* This is one of the most difficult and doubtful verses in the whole book of Psalms. The first word in Hebrew (נָאֵם) is a passive participle used as a noun, like the Latin *dictum*, and employed as a standing formula in prophecy to indicate the person speaking. The usual combination is (נָאֵם יְהוָה) *a dictum of Jehovah*, commonly translated in our Bible, *saith* (or *thus saith*) *the Lord*. Instead of the divine name, that of David is substituted in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 (נָאֵם דָּוִד), and *the man* there and also in Prov. xxx. 1 (נָאֵם הַנְּבִיר), both which appear to be copied from the words of Balaam in Num. xxiv. 15. The constant use of this formula to introduce prophetic *dicta* seems to require an analogous interpretation of it here, as meaning something more than the mere act of speaking, and suggesting the idea of an authoritative dictum or oracular response, proceeding not from God nor from his prophets, but from sin (פֶּשַׁע) which here supplies their place. *A dictum of depravity*, or, copying the paraphrastic but familiar version of נָאֵם יְהוָה in the English Bible, *thus saith transgression or corruption*.—The meaning of the next phrase (יִרְשָׁע) is determined by the analogy of Ps. cx. 1, where the

same preposition, after **נָאֻם יְהוָה**, can only indicate the object of address, *the saying of Jehovah* (or *thus saith Jehovah*) *to my Lord*. So here, the true construction is not, *the transgression of the wicked*, which indeed is ungrammatical, but *thus saith transgression to the wicked*. The only possible modification of this syntax, at all justified by usage, is to make **לְרָשָׁע** denote the subject not the object of the dictum—*thus saith depravity (as) to the wicked*—this is the testimony which it bears against him. This explanation, although not supported by Ps. cx. 1, is consistent with the frequent use of **לְ** to denote the subject, and affords a good sense, namely, that depravity itself bore witness against the wicked, in the Psalmist's mind, that there was no fear of God before his eyes. If, on the other hand, **לְרָשָׁע** indicates the object of address, the first clause may be the words of the wicked man himself, and the last clause the comment of the Psalmist on them. '*Thus saith depravity to (me) the wicked man, in the midst of my heart.*' *There is no fear of God before his eyes.* That is to say, the wicked man makes sin his god, and its suggestions his prophetic oracles, and thereby shows that there is no fear of God before his eyes. By a different interpunction, this sense may be put upon the sentence. *Thus saith depravity to the wicked man: 'In the midst of my heart there is no fear of God before his eyes,'* or even in his presence. But as this interpretation would make sin speak of its own heart in addressing the sinner, and as the reference of *his eyes* to God is somewhat forced, the choice seems to lie between the other two constructions before stated. one of which yields the same sense that appears to be intended in the common version, *the transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no fear of God before his eyes* and that of the Prayer Book, *my heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly that there is &c.* Amidst these various and doubtful explanations one thing is certain, that the wicked

man is here described as one who fears not God, just as the fear of God is elsewhere put for godliness or piety.

3 (2.) *For he has flattered himself in his own eyes, as to (God's) finding his iniquity (and) hating (it.)* The obscurity of the original may be shown by a bald translation. *For he has made smooth to him in his eyes, to find his iniquity to hate.* To make smooth, here and in Prov. xxix. 5, is an elliptical expression for making smooth the words or the actions, i. e. speaking or acting in a flattering manner. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) As there is no reflexive pronoun in Hebrew, the personal pronouns are occasionally so used, *him* for *himself*, *his* for *his own*, &c. In this case, however, it is possible to give them their strict meaning by referring them to God. *He* (the wicked man) *has made* (his words or actions) *smooth to him* (i. e. to God), *in his eyes* (the eyes of God.) In other words, he has endeavoured to deceive him by a specious appearance. But this construction is less natural, because it makes the phrase *in his eyes* still more redundant; because it represents the sinner as a hypocrite, rather than a bold, self-confident transgressor; and because it makes the last clause more obscure and difficult. *To find iniquity*, i. e. to detect and punish it, is an expression borrowed from Gen. xlv. 16. The unfavourable meaning of the phrase is determined by the addition of the words *to hate*. The reference of this clause to the sinner's own feelings is at variance with usage. With the whole verse compare Deut. xxix. 18 (19), and see above, on Ps. x. 6.

4 (3.) *The words of his mouth (are) falsehood and fraud, he has ceased to act wisely, to act well.* The use of the abstract for the concrete, *falsehood* and *deceit* for *false* and *deceitful*, adds to the strength of the expression. What he says is not merely false, but falsity itself. For the precise meaning of the Hebrew words, see above, on Ps. v. 6, 7 (5, 6.) The verbs

of the last clause are in the causative form, which always has an active meaning. *To be wise* is therefore an inadequate translation, and *to do good* an ambiguous one, as this English phrase is specially applied to acts of beneficence or practical utility. The true sense of the last verb is *to do well* or *right*, in opposition to doing wrong. See below, on Ps. xxxvii. 3. Instead of ceasing from his sins, the sinner has abandoned even the appearance of well-doing. The form of expression is like that in Isai. i. 16.

5 (4.) *Falsehood he will meditate upon his bed; he will take his stand upon a way not good; evil he will not abjure.* The first word (יָרָא), both in this and the preceding verse, does not mean mere false speaking, but a false character, one not according to the truth, of which the divine will is the standard. It is therefore nearly equivalent to wickedness. The futures express present habit and a settled purpose of continuance. While he continues what he is, he will continue thus to act *On his bed*, by night, the natural season of reflection. Or the idea may be that instead of sleeping he spends the hours of rest in meditating evil, or contriving mischief.—The verb to *set himself*, or *take his stand*, is the same that occurred before in Ps. ii. 2, and implies both a settled purpose and the commencement of its execution.—*A way not good* is an example of the figure called *meiosis*, in which more is meant than is expressed, although suggested by the context. The idea really conveyed to every reader is that of an extremely bad way or the worst way possible.—The last verb means to reject or renounce with contempt and abhorrence. See above, on Ps. xv. 4.

6 (5.) *Oh Jehovah, in the heavens (is) thy mercy, and thy faithfulness unto the clouds.* From the odious image of the sinner just presented he now turns away to contemplate the divine perfections. The parallelism of the clauses seems to

show that *in the heavens* means in heaven as well as on earth i. e. reaching from the one to the other, which idea is then literally expressed, *as far as*, even to, or up to, *the clouds*, which last is simply an equivalent to *heavens*.—*Mercy* and *faithfulness* are also parallels, the latter meaning God's fidelity or truth in the fulfilment of his promises, even to the undeserving. See below, on Ps. xxxvii. 3.

7 (6.) *Thy righteousness (is) like the hills of the Almighty; thy judgments (are) a great deep; man and beast thou wilt save, (oh) Jehovah!* Righteousness here means rectitude in its widest sense, including the veracity and faithfulness mentioned in the foregoing verse. *Judgments* is an idiomatic synonyme, the plural being either used to give it an abstract meaning, as in (תִּירוֹם) *life*, or to denote particular acts of righteousness. This attribute is here described as infinite, by a comparison with natural emblems of immensity. The first mentioned are *the mountains of God*, or *of the mighty (God)*, the divine name here used being that which properly denotes omnipotence. See above, on Ps. v. 5 (4.) By explaining this word as an abstract, we obtain the sense, *mountains of strength*, i. e. strong mountains; but the constant usage of the term as a divine name seems decisive in favour of the sense, hills produced by the almighty power of God and therefore proving it.—The *great deep*, the ocean, as in Gen. vii. 11. (Compare Gen. i. 2.) The idea conveyed is not so much that of depth and mystery as that of vastness and immensity. The comprehensiveness of God's protecting care is further indicated by the combination *man and beast* (or *brute*.) To *save* includes the acts of helping, protecting and providing.

8 (7.) *How precious (is) thy mercy (oh) God, and the sons of man in the shadow of thy wings may trust (or take refuge.)* The richness of God's mercy is apparent from the very fact



that it affords protection to mankind, meaning of course only those to whom it has been promised. The figure of over-spreading wings is carried out more fully in Deut. xxxii. 11 and Matt. xxiii 37.—For the meaning of the verb used in this verse, see above, on Ps. ii. 12.

9 (8.) *They shall be drenched with the abundance of thy house; (with) the stream of thy pleasures thou wilt water them (or give them drink.)* They, i. e. such of the children of men as are permitted to take refuge under God's protection.—*Shall drink abundantly*, or to satiety, be soaked or drenched. The derivative noun occurs above, in Ps. xxiii. 5.—*Abundance*, literally fat or fatness, put for the richest food. *Thy house*, thy household, with or without allusion to the tabernacle, not as a place of worship merely, but as the earthly residence of God. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 6. xxvii. 4. In the second clause there is a beautiful allusion to the river which watered the garden of Eden (Gen. ii. 10.) This allusion, although lost in a translation, is marked in the original by the use of the word *eden* in the plural number to mean pleasures or delights. The verb to *water* or *make drink* is also the one used in Gen. ii. 10, which shows that it is not a mere fortuitous coincidence.

10 (9.) *For with thee is a fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.* They shall derive all this from thee, because in thee alone is the exhaustless source of all these blessings.—*With thee*, in thy presence, in union and communion with thee.—The well-spring, fountain-head, or source of life, a summary expression for all enjoyments and advantages. The same idea is then clothed in another figurative dress. *In thy light we shall see light.* It is only by the light of God's countenance that man can see any good. It is only in God's favour that he can be happy. The only bliss attainable or desirable is

that which is bestowed by God and resides in him. See above on Ps. iv. 7 (6.)

11 (10.) *Continue thy mercy to those knowing thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.* To his glowing description of the blessedness resident in God and flowing from his favour, he now adds a prayer that it may be extended to the class, of which he claims to be a member. The first verb literally means to *draw out* or *protract*, and is the same that is used in different applications in Ps. x. 9. xxviii. 3 above.—*Those knowing thee* and as a necessary consequence loving thee, since genuine knowledge of the true God is inseparable from right affections towards him.—*Thy righteousness*, thy true and faithful dealings with those trusting in thy mercy, here and often elsewhere represented as the *upright* or straight forward *in heart* as well as in behaviour.

12 (11.) *Suffer not to come (upon) me foot of pride, and let not hand of wicked ones expel me.* What he had just asked for the upright in general, he now asks for himself in particular, plainly implying that the view which he had taken of human depravity in vs. 2—5 (1—4) was suggested by his own sufferings, or fear of suffering, at the hand of wicked enemies.—The verb in the first clause does not merely mean to *come against*, invade or threaten, but to *come upon*, implying actual and violent assault. See above, Ps. xxxv. 8. The mention of the *foot* suggests the ideas of spurning, trampling, and crushing; that of the *hand* the more general idea of exerted strength or violence. The last verb is a causative and strictly means to put to flight, cause to wander, or send into exile. Compare its use in 2 Kings xxi. 8. The general idea of the verse is, do not give me up to the power of my enemies.

13 (12.) *There are the doers of iniquity fallen; they are struck down and cannot rise (or stand.)* The prayer is follow

ed by a sudden assurance of its being answered, in the strength of which the Psalmist speaks of his desire as already accomplished. See above, on Ps. xx. 7 (6.)—*There* has very much the same sense as in common parlance, when uttered as a sudden exclamation. *There! they have fallen (already)*. Strictly explained, it means on the very spot and in the very midst of their anticipated triumph. See above, on Ps. xiv. 5, where the same use of the particle occurs, and compare Ps. cxxxii. 17 and Judg. v. 11, in all which places it is better to retain the local sense of *there* than to exchange it for the supposititious one of *then*, which never occurs elsewhere.—*Iniquity*, vanity or falsehood, in the sense explained above, on v. 5 (4.)—*Struck or smitten down*, a stronger phrase than *cast down*. See above, Ps. xxxv. 5.—The last words may either mean, they cannot stand their ground, save themselves from falling, or they cannot rise again when fallen. See above, Ps. i. 5. xviii. 39 (38), and compare Prov. xxiv. 16.

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## PSALM XXXVII.

THIS is an alphabetical psalm and, like others of the same kind (see above, on Ps. xxv), consists of variations on the theme propounded in the two first verses, namely, the idea, that the sinner is a self-destroyer, and therefore not an object of envy or revenge to the righteous, who may safely leave the punishment of his enemies, and the vindication of his own cause, in the hands of God. The whole psalm seems to have reference to David's own experience in the case of Saul, Nabal, Absalom, Abithophel, and others. See especially 1 Sam. xxv. 39. The psalm, from its aphoristic form, bears a very strong resemblance

to the book of Proverbs, and may have been the model on which it was constructed. The alphabetical arrangement, as in other cases of the same kind, is not perfect. Most of the letters have two verses each, but one has three, three have only one, and the letter *y* is omitted.

1. *Fret not thyself at evil-doers ; be not envious at workers of iniquity.* The first Hebrew verb is a reflexive form and strictly means to *heat one's self* with anger. It occurs only here and in Prov. xxiv. 19, where there is obvious allusion to this verse, as there is also in v. 1 of the same chapter, and in ch. iii. 31. xxiii. 17 of the same book.—*Be not envious at*, do not envy, the original verb being almost always construed with a preposition. *Evil-doers* in the Hebrew is a participle, and literally means those *making evil*, i. e. making their own conduct so. *Workers*, or more simply, *doers of iniquity*. The last noun, according to its etymology, denotes perversion, depravation, or depravity.

2. *For like the grass (in) haste shall they be mown, and like the green herb shall they fade (or wither.)* This verse assigns the reason of the exhortation in the one before it. Why should we vex ourselves or indulge an envious feeling towards that which is so soon to perish, and is therefore rather an object of compassion? These two verses contain the theme, of which the rest is a protracted variation.—*In haste*, soon, quickly. The preposition is expressed before the same noun in Ecc. iv. 12, but suppressed as here, in many other places, e. g. Num. xvii. 11. (xvi. 46.) Dent. xi. 17.—*The green herb*, literally, *greenness of herbage*, the second noun denoting the young tender grass, or the first growth of other plants. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 2. The verb at the end of the sentence is the same with that in Ps. i 3

3. *Trust in Jehovah and do good ; inhabit the land and*

*feed (on) truth.* The leading verb of each clause suggests the idea of security, the first sometimes meaning to be safe (Prov. xi. 15), and the second to repose (Deut. xxxiii. 20. Ps. lv. 7.) *Trust securely, dwell at ease* or in safety. To *do good* is not merely to perform acts of kindness and promote the happiness of others, but in a wider sense, to do what is morally good or right. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 4 (3.) *The land* is the land of promise, a secure abode in which is often used as a comprehensive expression for all the covenanted blessings of the chosen people. See Prov. ii. 21. x. 30. The verb *feed*, in Hebrew as in English, is used both transitively and intransitively, to denote the act of the shepherd and his flock respectively. Here it means to feed upon any thing with delight, as in Hos. xii. 2 (1.) Isai. xliv. 20. The *truth* thus fed upon is God's truth and faithfulness in the performance of his promise. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 6 (5.) This last clause has the force, though not the form, of a promise, and is so paraphrased in many versions. A less excusable departure from the form of the original is the explanation of אֱמֶנֶה as an adverb (*verily*), thus depriving the verb of its object and the clause of its chief emphasis, which lies in representing the veracity of God, or the certain fulfilment of his promise, as the very food by which the believer is sustained and his hope nourished.

4. *And delight thyself in Jehovah, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart.* Here too the command implies a promise, which is afterwards expressed. *Delight thyself*, seek and find thy happiness, *in Jehovah*, literally, *upon him*, the form of expression suggesting the idea of dependence and reliance, as well as that of union and communion. *Requests*, not mere *desires*, but *askings*, prayers. Compare Ps. xx. 6 (5.) xxi. 3. (2.)

5. *Roll upon Jehovah thy way, and trust upon him, and he will do (it.)* This last expression shows that the *way* is

something to be done, and accordingly we find in **Prov. xvi. 3** the explanatory variation, *roll to (or on) the Lord thy works*, i. e. what thou hast to do but canst not do it, metaphorically represented as a burden too heavy for the person bearing it, and therefore rolled upon the shoulders of another. See above, on **Ps. xxii. 9 (8)**, and below, on **Ps. lv. 23 (22)**, and compare **1 Peter v. 7**.—*Trust upon him*, a phrase more suggestive of dependence than *trust in him*. See above, on **v. 4**.—*He will do* what thou canst not do, or whatever must be done. See above, on **Ps. xxii. 32 (31)**.

6. *And (will) bring out thy right like the light, and thy cause like the noon.* He will espouse thy cause and make it triumph in the sight of all men. The figure of light suggests the double idea of relief from suffering and clear revelation after long concealment. Compare **Job xi. 17**. **Isai. lviii. 8**. **Mic. vii. 9**.—The Hebrew word for *noon* is of the dual form, and properly denotes two-fold or double light, i. e. the brightest, the most intense.

7. *Be silent to Jehovah*, await in silence what he is about to do, without impatient clamour or presumptuous interference. Compare **Ex. xiv. 13**. **2 Chr. xx. 17**. *And wait for him*, allow him time to act, instead of attempting to act for him. *Fret not thyself*, as in **v. 1**, heat not thyself with anger, *at (one) prospering his way*, making his way prosperous, i. e. succeeding in his course of life. See above, on **Ps. i. 1, 3**. *At a man doing*, i. e. practising or executing, *plans or plots*, as the Hebrew word has constantly a bad sense. Let no success or prosperity of sinners tempt thee to anticipate God's righteous judgments.

8. *Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thyself only to do evil.* Do not indulge a passion which can only make thee a partaker in the guilt of those who are its objects



9. *For evil-doers shall be cut off.* This is a twofold reason for obeying the injunction of the preceding verse; first, because the certain destruction of the wicked made such anger unnecessary as well as uncharitable; secondly, because the same destruction would befall the servant of the Lord, if he indulged an anger tending only to evil. *And (those) waiting for Jehovah,* patiently expecting the fulfilment of his promises and threatenings. As for them, *they*, with emphasis on the pronoun, *shall inherit the land*, the land of promise, the common formula for covenanted blessings. See above, on v. 3, and on Ps. xxv. 13.

10. *And yet a little*, i. e. ere long, soon—bear and forbear a little longer—and *the wicked is not*, or there is no wicked, there is no such person as the wicked man who seemed so prosperous—and *thou shalt gaze*, or look attentively, *upon his place*, the place which he now occupies, *and it is not*, his very place has disappeared—or referring the pronoun to the person, *he is not*, he is no more. Why then be discomposed, and even tempted into sin, by the sight of what is so soon to vanish?

11. *And the humble*, or as we should say in our idiom, *but the humble*, on the other hand, on their part, as contrasted both with the presumptuous sinner and the impatient querulous believer. *The humble*, here put for the whole class of submissive waiters upon God. For the true meaning of the Hebrew word, see above, on Ps. ix. 13 (12.)—*Shall inherit the land*, possess it by a filial right, be heirs to all the blessings of the covenant. See above, on vs. 3, 9.—*And delight themselves*, enjoy themselves, be happy, as in v. 4 above.—*In abundance*, or increase, the infinitive of a verb which means to be increased or multiplied, and which occurs above, in Ps. iii. 2 (1.)—*Of peace*, in the wide sense of prosperity, well-being, as opposed to want and suffering, and not merely of repose or quiet, as opposed to strife and perturbation.

12. *Plotting*, habitually meditating evil, (*is the*) *wicked (man)*, as to (or against) *the righteous*, and *gnashing at him* (or upon him) *with his teeth*, gnashing his teeth at him, as a natural token of bestial malignity. This is a kind of concession, that the wicked man deserves no forbearance on the part of the righteous, who is not, however, therefore at liberty to anticipate God's judgments, for the reason given in the next verse.

13. *The Lord*, the sovereign of the universe, as well as the protector of his people, *laughs*, or will laugh, *at him*, with derisive pity. See above, on Ps. ii. 4 — *For*, because, *he sees*, he has already seen as something fixed and certain, *that his day*, his own appointed day of vengeance, or more probably the sinner's day of punishment, *will come*, is coming. However long it may be put off, God knows that it will come at last, a fearful intimation of the certainty of future retribution. Compare Eccl. viii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 4. Heb. x. 37.

14. *The sword*, put for all offensive weapons, and indeed for all destructive agents. See above, on Ps. xxii. 21 (20.) — *They have opened*, i. e. loosened or uncovered, drawn. — *The wicked*, the whole class of evil-doers, whose destruction he had just foretold. — *And have trodden*, i. e. bent by treading on it. See above, on Ps. vii. 13 (12.) — *Their bow*, often coupled with the sword, both in prose, as being literally the other most familiar implement of ancient warfare, and in poetry, as a parallel figure for destructive hostility. — *To make fall*, cast down, overthrow, *the sufferer*, the afflicted. See above, on Ps. ix. 13 (12.) — *And the poor*, the destitute or needy one, a more specific term often added to the generic one which here precedes it. In all such cases, it is implied that the sufferers are the suffering righteous, the afflicted people of Jehovah — *To slay*, or slaughter. The original expression is a very strong one, being properly applied to the slaughtering of cattle. See Ex. xxi. 37 (xxii. 1). 1 Sam

xxv. 11. So in English a sanguinary battle is described as great slaughter.—*The straight*, straight-forward, upright, or sincere, (*in*) *way*, a common figure for the course of life or the habitual conduct. See above, on Ps. i. 1. The mention of this moral quality confirms the explanation just given of the *suffering and needy*, not as such considered, but as sufferers in the cause of truth and righteousness, as suffering for God and from the malice of his enemies.

15. *Their sword*, the sword of these malignant foes, *shall go into their heart*, their own heart. They shall be destroyed by the very means which they prepared for the destruction of their betters. This idea of a providential *lex talionis* is one repeatedly expressed under various figurative forms. See above, Ps. vii. 16, 17 (15, 16.) ix. 16, 17 (15, 16), and below, Ps. lvii. 7 (6), and compare the imitation in Prov. xxvi. 27, and the historical example afforded by the case of Haman, Esth. vii. 10.—*And their bows*, the parallel expression, as in v. 14, for their implements of warfare and destruction, *shall be broken*, rendered useless. The substitution of the plural for the singular, and of a single verb for the expected repetition of the first clause adds greatly to the force and beauty of the passage.

16. *Good is a little to the righteous*, which in our idiom means, *better is a little that the righteous has*. This clause exemplifies two remarkable deficiencies of the Hebrew language, the want of a distinct form for the comparative degree, which can only be suggested by construction or the context, and the want of the verb *have*, which is common to the whole Semitic family of languages.—*Than the noise*, tumult, turmoil, which attends the acquisition and the care of great possessions. That the Hebrew word (המון) denotes this incident of wealth rather than wealth itself, may be inferred, not only from its etymology and its use in 1 Sam. iv. 14, xiv. 19. 1 Kings xviii. 41, &c, but

from the analogy of Ps. xxxix, 7 (6) and Prov. xv. 16.—*Of many wicked*, whose noisy and vexatious wealth is here contrasted with the quiet enjoyment of one righteous man, not only with respect to present ease of mind, but also to their future destiny, as stated in the next verse.

17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken.* The ambiguity of our word *arms* has nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew, where the only possible sense is that of *arms* as members of the body. Not only their weapons, but their arms, not only their implements of death, but the strength with which they wielded them, is broken, weakened, rendered useless.—*And*, or, as our idiom requires an adversative in such connexions, *but sustaining the righteous*, their habitual supporter, (*is*) *Jehovah*, the divine name being placed emphatically at the close, a feature copied in the ancient versions, but obliterated in most modern ones.

18. *Knowing*, habitually, always knowing, (*is*) *Jehovah*, i. e. Jehovah knows.—*The days*, the life, including both duration and events. Compare Ps. xxxi. 16 (15).—*Of perfect (men)*, those free from essential defect or obliquity of character. See above, on Ps. xviii. 24 (23.) The epithet is evidently used as an equivalent to *the righteous* in v. 17. God knows their days, how long they are to live, and what is to befall them, with an implication that he knows they will be numerous and good days. See above, on Ps. i. 6. The same idea is then stated more distinctly in the last clause. *And their heritage*, their portion, their condition, as God's heirs, *to eternity shall be*, or shall continue. While this expression would perhaps suggest to a contemporary reader nothing more than an undisturbed possession, on the part of the righteous, as contrasted with the short-lived prosperity of sinners, it necessarily conveys to our

minds the idea of a literally everlasting, indefeasible inheritance  
See 1 Pet. i. 4.

19. *They shall not be ashamed*, disappointed, or deceived in their expectations. See above, on Ps. vi. 11 (10.) xxii. 6 (5).—*In an evil time*, or, *in a time of evil*, i. e. of calamity or danger. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) x. 1. At such a time, their expectation of deliverance and safety shall not be frustrated.—*And in days of famine*, a specification of the general description, *evil time*, or *time of evil*, not unlike that of the general term, *suffering* or *afflicted*, by the specific one, *poor* or *needy*, in v. 14 above.—*They shall be satisfied*, or *filled*, but only in a good sense, without any implication of satiety or surfeit. Compare Matth. v. 6. Luke vi. 21. The promise of this clause is not only specific but positive, whereas that of the first is both generic and negative. Compare Ps. xxxiii. 19.

20. This verse shows how the truth of the foregoing promises can be consistent with the actual prosperity of wicked men. Do not doubt the truth of these assurances because the wicked now seem happy, or because they now prevent your being so, by their oppressions and hostilities. *For* all this is soon to cease. *The wicked shall perish*, are to perish, *and the enemies of Jehovah*, another description of the same class, showing that these judgments awaited them, not merely as the foes of the Psalmist, or of righteous men in general, but of God himself. See above, on Ps. v. 5 (4).—*Like the precious* (part) *of lambs*, i. e. the sacrificial fat, which was burnt upon the altar, *they have consumed*; *in smoke*, or *into smoke*, *they have consumed* (or *vanished*.) The preterite form of the verb represents the predicted consummation as already past in the perceptions of the writer. Some understand by רָקַר פְּרִים *the delight of lambs*, i. e. their pasture, and suppose an allusion to the short-lived verdure of the fields, a common figure for the brevity

of human life, which occurs near the beginning of this very psalm (v. 2.) Others obtain the same sense by explaining פָּרִים itself to mean *pastures*, as it seems to do in Isai. xxx. 23, and perhaps in Ps. lxxv. 14 (13.) It is best, however, to retain the usual and certain sense of *lambs*, whether the reference be to their *pasture* or their *fat*, which last is recommended by the mention of *smoke* in the same connexion. This may indeed be an independent figure, but it is much more natural to connect it with the lambs, and understand it to denote the smoke ascending from the altar upon which they were consumed in sacrifice. In either case, however, and on any exegetical hypothesis whatever, the essential meaning of the figures is the same, to wit, that the prosperity of sinners is but short-lived, and that they themselves will vanish speedily and wholly, and are therefore in the mean time not a proper object of envious dissatisfaction or a legitimate occasion of skeptical misgiving to the righteous.

21. *Borrowing*, a habitual borrower, (*is*) *the wicked*, and *he will not pay*, i. e. he cannot, because he is reduced to poverty, whereas *the righteous*, under the divine blessing on his outward condition, is continually *showing mercy*, doing acts of kindness, and particularly *giving*, supplying the necessities of others. This description of the difference between the two conditions is derived from the promise in the Law to the true Israel. "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee as he said to thee, and thou shalt lend to many nations and thou shalt not borrow, and thou shalt rule over many nations, and over thee they shall not rule." Deut. xv. 6, xxviii. 12, 44. Compare Prov. xxii. 7. This proverbial use of borrowing and lending as a sign of poverty and wealth, shows that the verse before us does not relate to willingness but to ability to lend or give. It is not the moral but the material difference of the two men, or the classes which they represent, that is here brought directly into view, although



the one is really dependent on the other, as appears from the next verse.

22. *For his blessed ones*, those blessed by him, i. e. by God, *shall inherit the land*, in the same sense as before, and so be able not only to lend but to give away, *and*, on the other hand, or *but*, *his cursed ones*, those cursed by him, shall not only be unable to do either and dependent on the charity of others, but *shall be cut off*, destroyed, exterminated, with allusion no doubt to the use of the same Hebrew verb in reference to excision from the communion and the privileges of the chosen people. See Gen. xvii. 14. Ex. xii. 15. Lev. vii. 20, 21. Num. xv 30. &c., but especially Lev. xvii. 14. xx. 17, where the verb is absolutely used in this sense as in the case before us. Thus understood, the verse assigns the blessing and the curse of God as a reason for the difference of condition mentioned in the verse preceding, whereas no such reason could be given for the difference of moral character, and the *for* in that case would be either out of place or unmeaning.

23. *From Jehovah*, by him, or by a power proceeding from him, the *steps of a man*, his course of life, all that befalls him, *have been settled*, fixed, or ordered, *and in his way*, a parallel expression to *his steps*, *will he delight*, i. e. he will delight to execute the plan thus formed. Although this is in form a general proposition, it is obviously meant to be applied specifically to the righteous as the objects of God's favour, and to account for their superior prosperity, if not at present, yet hereafter.

24. *For he will fall*; in this life fluctuations and reverses are to be expected, and it forms no part of the divine plan to prevent them. (But) *he shall not be thrown down*, prostrated wholly or forever. The contrast of a mere fall and a permanent prostration is intended to express that between occasional mis-

fortunes and utter ruin. This clause may also be translated, *when (or if) he falls he shall not be thrown down*; but the construction is less simple, and the sense given to the particle more doubtful and unusual. And although the essential meaning of the sentence is the same in either case, it is weakened by losing the concession, that even the righteous must expect to suffer, but not to perish like the wicked. *For Jehovah (is) holding up his hand*, or holding him up by his hand. See below, on Ps. lxxiii. 23. The participle, as usual, denotes continued action. God not only sustains him in particular emergencies; but is his habitual upholder. See above, on vs. 12, 18, 21.

25. *A boy*, a child, or more indefinitely, *young have I been*; *I have also been old*, am now become old; and yet, throughout this long life, *I have not seen a righteous (man) forsaken (of God)*, i. e. finally and utterly, *and his seed*, his children or his more remote descendants, *begging bread*, subsisting on the charity of others. This is not to be absolutely understood, but as a general proposition, and with due regard to the peculiar state of things under the law of Moses, which made ample provision for the temporal comfort of every individual who acknowledged its authority and obeyed its precepts, so that entire destitution might more justly be regarded as a token of divine displeasure than it can be among us.

26. On the contrary, he has enough, not only for himself, but for his poorer neighbours. *All the day (long)*, i. e. continually, as a habitual employment, *(he is) showing mercy*, doing acts of kindness, *and lending*, as an act of charity, not as a commercial operation, which was unknown among the ancient Hebrews. See above, on Ps. xv. 5.—*And his seed (is) for a blessing*, i. e. happy themselves and a source of happiness to others. The form of expression seems to be borrowed from the promise to Abraham in Gen. xii. 2.

27. *Depart from evil, and do good, and dwell for evermore*  
 This is the practical application of the foregoing lessons. *Evil* and *good* are correlative and coextensive terms. As *evil* includes all that is morally wrong, *good* includes all that is morally right, and to *do good* is to do well or act rightly. See above, on v. 3.—*Dwell*, i. e. dwell securely, as in v. 3, where as here the exhortation or command involves a promise. *Forever*, literally, to *eternity* or *perpetuity*. As to the idea which these expressions would convey to Jewish and to Christian readers, see above, on v. 18.

28. *For Jehovah (is) loving*, he habitually loves, *judgment*, i. e. justice actually exercised, the doing of justice. The *for* assigns a reason for the strong assurance at the close of the preceding verse. No one need fear to lay hold of the promise in its widest sense; for it is not an arbitrary one, but a spontaneous expression of God's natural essential love of moral rectitude. *And*, as a necessary consequence of this, *he will not forsake his gracious ones*, the objects of his grace or favour. For the true sense of the Hebrew word, see above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) xii. 2 (1.) xviii. 26 (25.) xxx. 5 (4.) xxxi. 24 (23.) Those whom he once favours he will not forsake. *For ever*, to eternity, *they are kept*, kept safe, preserved. The past tense of the verb is peculiarly appropriate to describe their preservation as already secured. So certain is it, that he seems to look back upon the future as already past, and says, *they have been kept forever*. Here again, although a Jewish reader might have been inclined to put a lower sense upon *forever*, as denoting nothing more than permanency in contrast with the fluctuations of secular prosperity, it is neither right nor possible for us to give it any but its strongest and its most extensive application. See above, on v. 18, and compare 1 Peter i. 5.—Equally certain is the fate of the ungodly. *And the seed of wicked men (is) cut off*, has already been cut off, in the divine prescience and

purpose, from all participation in the blessings of the righteous. See above, on v. 22.

29. *The righteous shall inherit the land*, possess the land of promise by a filial right, *and dwell*, securely and in peace, *forever*, to eternity, *upon it*. See the same expressions used and explained above, on vs. 3, 9, 18, 22.

30. *The mouth of the righteous will utter wisdom*. Lest the foregoing promises should be appropriated by the wicked, he lays down a test of character by which the righteous man may be distinguished. He is one whose mouth utters wisdom, in the high religious sense. For the meaning of the verb, see above, on Ps. xxxv. 28.—*And his tongue will speak judgment*, i. e. justice, rectitude, here used as an equivalent to wisdom, both denoting true religion, in its intellectual and moral aspects, with particular reference to its effects upon the speech or conversation of its subjects.

31. *The Law of his God is in his heart*, not merely on his lips, and may therefore be expected to keep him in the right way. *His steps shall not swerve* from the straight path, or *waver* in it. See above, on Ps. xviii. 37 (36.)

32. *Watching*, ever watching, *(is) the wicked for the righteous*, for means and opportunities of injury, *and seeking to kill him*. The enemies of God, as all the wicked are, must needs be the enemies of his people also.

33. *Jehovah will not leave him in his hand*, will not abandon the righteous to the power of the wicked, *and will not make him guilty*, a forensic term of the Mosaic Law, meaning to regard or treat as guilty, to condemn (Ex. xxii. 8, 9. Deut. xxv. 1), *in his being judged*, when he is tried. The image

here presented may be that of a judicial process between the righteous and the wicked at the bar of God, who will not and cannot condemn the innocent.

34. *Wait thou for Jehovah*, for the manifestation of his presence and his will, as in v. 7 above. *And keep his way*, adhere to the path which he has marked out for thee. *And he will raise thee*, lift thee up, exalt thee, from thy present low condition, *to inherit the land*, to enjoy the benefits and blessings of his covenant. See above, on vs. 3, 9, 11, 30. *In the excision of the wicked*, when the wicked are cut off from all connexion with God's people and participation in their privileges, *thou shalt see (it)*. Or as the verb to *see*, when construed with this preposition (ב) often means to see with pleasure, this clause may be translated, *at the excision of the wicked thou shalt gaze*, as a pleased and wondering spectator.

35. *I saw a wicked (man)*. The issue just predicted is now made the subject of a picture, as if present to the senses. The Hebrew word which follows (עָרִץ) means terrible, especially from one's extraordinary strength or power, with an implication sometimes of its violent exertion. *I saw (such) a wicked man, a terrible one, and spreading himself like a native (tree)* i. e. one which has never been transplanted, *green* and flourishing. The word translated *native* is always elsewhere used of human subjects, but is here applied, by a bold personification, to a vigorous tree, rooted in its native soil, and seemingly immoveable.

36. *And he passed (away), and lo!* an expression always implying something unexpected, *he was not*, he was no more, there was no longer such a person. See above, on v. 10. *And I sought him*. I looked round as if to see what was become of him, *and he was not found*, or as we might say, *to be found!*

This verse may be referred to the tree, *it* passed away, I looked for *it*, and *it* could not be found. But as the tree is only introduced in the preceding verse as a comparison, it is better to regard the wicked man as the subject of both sentences.

37. *Mark the perfect (man)*, observe him closely, *and behold the upright*, or straight-forward. He appeals to general experience and calls upon his hearers or readers to judge for themselves. *For an end*, a future state, and by implication a happy one, (*is*) *to the man of peace*, who instead of undertaking to avenge himself, patiently waits for the divine interposition. The common version (*for the end of that man is peace*) is forbidden not only by the accents, but by the impossibility of making *וְאַחֵר* mean *of that man*, without a violation of all usage and analogy.

38. *And the rebels* against God, those who revolt from his authority, and cast off their allegiance to their rightful sovereign, a common scriptural description of the wicked, *are destroyed together*, or *at once*. See the use of the same adverb in Ps. iv. 9 (8.) This certain issue is referred to, as already past or present. See above, on v. 28. *The end*, futurity, or hope, *of the wicked is cut off*. The futurity meant is one of happiness, as in v. 37, the true sense of which is thus determined. The contrast presented is, that one has an end or a futurity, the other none.

39. *And the salvation of the righteous*, far from being wrought out by themselves, (*is*) *from Jehovah*, comes from him as its author and its source. See above, on Ps. iii. 9 (8.) (*He* .s) *their strength*, or strong-hold, fortress, place of refuge and defence, as in Ps. xxvii. 1. xxviii. 8. xxxi. 3, 5 (2, 4). *In time of trouble*, or distress. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) x. 1



40. *And Jehovah has helped them.* It is not in name or in profession merely that he is their strong-hold and protector. *Jehovah has helped them and delivered them.* And what he has done he will still do. *He will deliver them from the wicked.* The mention of this specific evil brings us back to the point from which we started, the temptation to repine at the prosperity of sinners and resent their evil treatment. But the true wisdom of the righteous is to wait, to wait for God. *He will deliver them from the wicked, and will save them* from all evil, as this verb when absolutely used imports, not because of any merit upon their part, but *because they have trusted*, taken refuge, sought for shelter, *in him*, not only under his protection, but in intimate union and communion with him. See above, on Ps. ii. 12. v. 12 (11.) vii. 2 (1.) xxv. 20. xxi. 2 (1.)

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## PSALM XXXVIII.

A SUFFERER, in sore distress of mind and body, aggravated by the neglect of friends and the spite of wicked enemies, acknowledges all to be the fruit of his own sins, and prays that the effect may cease by the removal of the cause.

The Psalm contains three distinct complaints, or descriptions of his suffering, separated by two appeals to God, with a prayer at the beginning and the end of the whole Psalm. After the title, v. 1, comes the first prayer, v. 2 (1); then the first complaint, vs. 3—9 (2—8); then an appeal to the divine omniscience, v. 10 (9); then the second complaint, vs. 11—15 (10—14); then an expression of hope and confidence in God,

v. 16 (15); then the third complaint, vs. 17—21 (16—20); and then the closing prayer, vs. 22, 23 (21, 22)

1. *A Psalm. By David. To remind*, or bring to remembrance, i. e. to remind God of the sufferer, whom he seems to have forgotten, with allusion no doubt to the frequent use of the same verb in reference to penitent self-recollection on the part of sinners. See 1 Kings xvii. 18. Ez. xxi. 29 (24.) xxix. 16. Num. v. 15.

2 (1.) *Jehovah, do not, in thy wrath, rebuke me, and in thy heat (or hot displeasure) chasten me.* The force of the negative extends to both clauses. *Rebuke*, not in word merely, but in deed, corresponding to *chasten*, chastise, punish, in the other clause. He does not pray, as some suppose, for moderate punishment, or for loving as opposed to angry chastisement, but for deliverance from any punishment whatever, which is always indicative of God's displeasure. See above, on Ps. vi. 2 (1.)

3 (2.) *For thine arrows are sunk into me, and thy hand has sunk upon me.* This verse assigns the reason of the prayer in that before it. *Arrows*, sharp inflictions, as in Deut. xxxii. 23. Job vi. 4. The verbs of the two clauses are active and passive forms from the same root. *Sunk into*, penetrated, and by implication, *stuck fast*, although this specific idea is not expressed. *Sunk upon*, heavily descended, or as the English Version has it, *presseth me sore*. Compare Ps. xxxii. 4. xxxix. 11 (10.)

4 (3.) *There is no sound place in my flesh because of thine anger; there is no peace in my bones because of my sin.* Here begins a more particular description of the sufferings indicated by the general terms of the preceding verse. The first thing mentioned is his bodily suffering, as a token of God's wrath and

an effect of his own sin, by which that wrath had been provoked. *Flesh and bones* are put for the whole bodily frame. The word translated *sound place* is a local noun, as indicated by its form, and not an abstract (*soundness*.) It occurs only in this passage and in Isaiah's imitation of it. (Is. i. 6.) There, as here, the body is represented as one bruise, in which there is *no sound place*, i. e. no spot free from pain or soreness.—*Because of*, literally from the face of, from the presence of, from before, the phrase being primarily used to denote fear or flight before an enemy. *Peace* may be taken in the wide sense of well-being, good condition, health, (see above, on Ps. xxxvii. 11); but it more probably denotes peace in the strict sense, i. e. rest or freedom from the disquietude produced by pain.

5 (4.) *For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* This is an amplification of the last words of the verse preceding. 'I say my sin, because the sense of my iniquities has now become intolerable.' *Gone over*, literally, *passed*, i. e. surpassed, exceeded, or transcended. *Too heavy for me*, or *heavier than I*, i. e. heavier than I can bear. The reference is not merely to the effects of sin, but to the sense of sin itself, the consciousness of guilt, which he now associates with all his sufferings. As the preterite of the first clause represents the overwhelming sense of guilt as something experienced already, so the future of the second speaks of its excessive weight as something likely to continue.

6 (5.) *My stripes have putrefied and are corrupted because of my foolishness.* The first noun does not denote *wounds* in general, but the swelling produced by stripes. Compare Isai i. 6. The two verbs both denote suppuration, the first in reference to the offensive smell, the second to the running or discharge of matter. This may be literally understood, as denoting a particular form of bodily distress; but it seems more natura

to explain it as a figurative representation of extreme suffering, not unmingled with disgrace. All this he refers to his own *foolishness* or folly, in the strong sense of criminal blindness and irrationality. See above, on Ps. xiv. 1.

7 (6.) *I have writhed, I have bowed down greatly; all the day mourning I have gone.* The first word is a passive, meaning strictly to be twisted or distorted, elsewhere metaphorically applied to moral obliquity or perverseness (Prov. xii. 8. 1 Sam. xx. 30), but here used in its proper sense to signify the distortion of the body by extreme pain, as in Isai. xxi. 3. The bowing or bending down may be from the same cause, or as a customary sign of grief. Indeed the two ideas of sorrow and bodily pain run into each other throughout this passage. The word translated *mourning* properly means *black*, or more specifically, black with dirt, begrimed, or squalid, in allusion to the ancient oriental custom of sitting in the dust and putting ashes on the head, as signs of mourning. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 14. *Greatly.* The Hebrew phrase means *until very much*, or unto extremity. מְאֹדָּה is originally a noun meaning *strength*, but except in the formula, *with all thy strength*, is generally used as an adverb answering to *very*, *greatly*, or *exceedingly*, in English. *I have gone.* The Hebrew verb is an intensive form, nearly equivalent to *gone about* in English. For a still stronger intensive from the same root, see above, on Ps. xxvi. 3. xxxv. 14, in the last of which places we have also the words here translated *bowed down* and *mourning*.

8 (7.) *For my loins are filled with parching, and there is no sound place in my flesh.* The loins, instead of being covered with fat (Job xv. 27), are filled with dryness, literally, (*something*) *parched* or *dried up* with extreme heat. To a Hebrew reader this word would necessarily suggest the additional idea of *despised*, *contemptible*, which the same form often conveys

elsewhere (e. g. 1 Sam. xviii. 23. Prov. xii. 9. Isai. iii. 5.) In deed it may be doubted whether this is not the only sense intended here, as that of *parched* is always expressed elsewhere by a different participial form (Lev. ii. 14. Jos. v. 11.) On either supposition, the meaning given in the English Version (*a loathsome disease*) is implied, if not expressed. The repetition in the last clause from v. 4 (3) above brings him back to the point from which he started.

9 (8.) *I am benumbed and bruised exceedingly; I have roared from the murmur of my heart.* *Benumbed*, especially from cold, chilled, frozen, torpid. *Bruised* or broken. The same verb is used to express contrition or brokenness of heart in Ps. li. 19 (17) below; but here it has its proper sense and is descriptive of a bodily condition. See above, on Ps. x. 10.—*Exceedingly*, the same phrase as in v. 7 (6) above. In the last clause two words are employed, both denoting animal sounds, and nearly corresponding to our *roar* and *growl*. In Isai. v. 29, both verbs are applied to the lion, and both translated *roar* in the English Bible. For the use of such figures, see above, on Ps. xxii. 2 (1.) The idea here is that his audible complaints are not expressions of mere bodily distress, but of mental and spiritual anguish. The roaring of his voice is but an echo of the murmur in his heart.

10 (9.) *Lord, before thee (is) all my desire, and my sighing (or groaning) from thee is not hid.* This is at once an asseveration that his account of his own sufferings was not exaggerated or fictitious, and a reason why it need not be continued. 'Thou knowest, oh Lord, what I ask and what I need, the depth of my necessities and the intensity of my desires.'

11 (10.) *My heart pants (or palpitates); my strength has left (or failed) me; and the light of my eyes—even they are*

*not with me* Here begins his second complaint or passionate description of his sufferings, in which those arising from the conduct of others are made prominent. In this introductory verse, however, he describes the effect upon his own feelings, before proceeding to declare the cause. The palpitation of the heart, denoting violent agitation, is combined with loss of strength and that dimness of the eyes, so often mentioned as a sign of extreme weakness. See above, on Ps. xiii. 4 (3), and compare Ps. vi. 8 (7), xxxi. 10 (9), xl. 13 (12.) The last clause admits of two grammatical constructions. 1. 'My strength has failed me, and (so has) the light of my eyes; even they are not with me.' 2. '(As to) the light of my eyes, even they are not with me.' The first agrees best with our idiom, and the last with the masoretic interpunction, which separates *the light of my eyes* from the preceding verb and noun by a pause accent.—*Even they*, literally, *they too*.—'Not only is my strength gone, but my eye-sight likewise, but my very eyes.'—*Not with me*, not in my possession, not at my command, gone from me. For a similar expression, see above, on Ps. xii. 5 (4.)—The preterites in the first clause represent the palpitation and debility as something of long standing, or at least as fully experienced already.

12 (11) *My lovers and my friends away from my stroke will stand, and my neighbours afar off have stood.* He now gives expression to the anguish caused by human unkindness, and first, by that of such as he believed to be his friends. These are represented as *standing aloof*, literally, *from before*, i. e. out of sight, as in Gen. xxi. 16 and Is. i. 16, not *over against*, as implying opposition or hostility. What he here complains of is indifference and neglect, as appears from the parallel expression, *far off*, literally *from afar*, according to a common Hebrew idiom which expresses the position of an object in terms strictly denoting motion or direction. See for example Gen. ii. 8, where *eastward* is in Hebrew *from the*



*east*, and the familiar phrase *from the right or left hand*, where we say *at* or *on* it. This usage renders it unnecessary, although not inadmissible, in the case before us, to supply a word, 'they stand (looking) from afar.' The word translated *neighbours* means those near one, either in local habitation or affinity, and may therefore be considered as including the idea expressed in the English Version, *kinsmen*. Unless the variation of the tenses in this sentence is entirely unmeaning, which is highly improbable, both in itself and from analogy, the last clause may be understood to state as an actual reality, what is only apprehended in the first as probable or certain but still future. As if he had said, 'My friends will no doubt stand aloof from this affliction; nay, they are already afar off.'—*Stroke* is here put for a providential or divine infliction in general, not for sickness exclusively, much less for a particular disease, such as the leprosy, which Jerome actually introduces into his translation. See below, on Ps. xxxix. 11 (10), and compare Job xix. 21. Isai. liii. 4. Some suppose that there is an allusion to this verse in the statement made by one of the evangelists, that the women who had followed Christ from Galilee, and *all his acquaintances*, stood afar off, gazing at his crucifixion. See Luke xxiii. 49, and compare Mark xv. 40, 41.

13 (12.) *And those seeking my soul (or life) have laid wait (or laid snares) for me, and those seeking my hurt have spoken mischiefs, and deceits all the day will they utter (or devise.)* While his friends and neighbours stand aloof, his enemies are busy in attempting to destroy him. *Seeking my life*, as in Ps. xxxv. 4 and Ex. iv. 19. This phrase is particularly frequent in the history of David's persecutions. See 1 Sam. xx. 1. xxii. 23. xxiii. 15. 2 Sam. iv. 8. xvi. 11. The idea of *seeking* is expressed by two entirely different verbs in Hebrew. With the first clause compare Ps. xxxvii. 32.—*Mischiefs*, or still more strongly, *crimes*. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9.) The re-

ference may be either to malicious consultation, or to slander, or to both. The last verb may be taken in either of its senses (see above, on Ps. i. 2. ii. 1. xxxvii. 30), both which are appropriate in this connexion. *All the day* (long), continually. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 26.

14 (13.) *And I, as a deaf (man), will not hear, and as dumb (man) will not open his mouth.* This is at the same time an aggravation of his sufferings and a declaration of his patience under them. He is obliged to hear their calumnies and blasphemies as though he heard them not, being neither able to silence them nor willing to dispute them. The same two Hebrew words for *deaf* and *dumb* are used together in Ex. iv. 11. Not only the idea, but the form of expression in this sentence, is copied by Isaiah in his prophetic description of Christ's sufferings (Isai. liii. 7), and seems to have been present to our Saviour's own mind when he "held his peace" before the High Priest (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63), and "gave no answer" to the Roman Governor (John xix. 9.)

15 (14.) *And I was as a man who does not hear, and there are not in his mouth replies (or arguments.)* The same thing is repeated, to make still more prominent the patience and forbearance of the sufferer. *Does not hear*, literally, (is) *not hearing*. In our idiom the last clause would have been, *in whose mouth there are no replies*. The meaning *reproofs* is a secondary one, derived from that of *proofs* or arguments. See Job xiii. 6. xxiii. 4.—The idea in both verses is, that he endured the evil speaking of his enemies, as one who had nothing to say for himself or in reply to their reproaches. This, while it mortified his pride, and thereby added to his pain, was at the same time an evidence of faith and patience, and thus prepares the way for the profession in the next verse.

16 (15.) *Because for thee I waited ; thou wilt answer, Lord, my God !* His silence and forbearance, though a part of his sore trial, did not spring from weakness, but from faith in God, and submission to his precept. (See above, Ps. xxxvii. 7.) ‘I retorted not their calumnies and taunts, because I waited for thee to vindicate my cause, and so thou wilt, thou wilt certainly answer.’ The last verb does not mean *shalt answer for me*, as the Prayer Book version has it, but as in other cases, *hear or answer* my petition for relief and vindication, whether silent or expressed. See above, on Ps. v. 2 (1), and compare Ps. iii. 5 (4.) iv. 2 (1.) xiii. 4 (3.) xvii. 6. xviii. 42 (41.) xx. 10 (9.) xxii. 3 (2.) xxvii. 7. xxxiv. 5 (4.)—*Lord*, not *Jehovah*, but *Adhonai*, the divine name which properly means *Lord* or *Sovereign*. See above, Ps. ii. 4. xxii. 31 (30.) xxxv. 17, 22, 23. xxxvii. 13.—*My God*, and as such bound by covenant to hear me

17 (16.) *For I said, Lest they rejoice respecting me ; in the slipping of my foot, they have (already) magnified (themselves) against me.* His tranquillity did not arise from insensibility to danger, but from confidence in God. He was not without fear that his enemies might triumph over him, as they were already disposed to do, when he merely stumbled but did not actually fall.

18 (17.) *Because I for limping (am) ready, and my grief is before me always.* This verse assigns a reason for the triumph of his enemies, to wit, that he was really in danger. *Ready to halt or limp*, i. e. constantly liable to some interruption of his even prosperous course. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 15. The form of expression does not exclude the idea of his actually halting, but rather suggests it. As if he had said, ‘The slightest occasion makes me halt or limp.’ *Grief* or *sorrow* seems

to be put here for that which causes it. I am always in full view of my worst distress.

19 (18.) *For my iniquity I will declare, I will be anxious on account of my sin.* In our idiom this is tantamount to saying, I must confess that I am guilty; I have reason to be anxious on account of my sin.

20 (19.) *And my deadly enemies are strong, and multiplied are those hating me falsely (or without a cause.)* Instead of *deadly* some find the opposite idea, *lively*, here expressed. *My enemies (are) living (or alive), they are strong.* Or, *my living enemies are strong.* But חַיִּים is the common Hebrew word for *life*, and as שֹׁנְאֵי שֶׁקֶר means *my enemies of falsehood*, אֹיְבֵי חַיִּים may mean *my enemies of life*, those who hate my life and would deprive me of it. Compare אֹיְבֵי בָנָשׁ in Ps. xvii. 9 above.—*Hating me falsely.* Compare Ps. xxxv. 19. lxix. 5 (4.)

21 (20.) *And (those) repaying evil for good—they will oppose me for pursuing good.* The first clause seems to belong to the preceding sentence, and to complete the description of his enemies, 'those hating me without cause and repaying evil for good.' Compare Ps. xxxv. 12—16. *Oppose me*, be my enemies. The Hebrew verb is the root of the name *Satan*, the Enemy or Adversary of God and Man. From its etymology, the verb would seem to denote specifically treacherous hostility.—The preposition in the last clause properly means *under*, then *instead of*, and more rarely *in return for*, which is the sense here. *In return for my pursuing good*, i. e. earnestly and eagerly endeavouring to be good and to do right. This was of itself sufficient to provoke their enmity.

22 (21.) *Leave me not, (oh) Jehovah' (Oh) my God, be*

*not far from me!* Having twice described his urgent need, he now resumes the tone of complaint with which the psalm began. The petition in this verse is one of frequent occurrence in the Psalms. See above, Ps. x. 1. xiii. 2 (1.) xxii. 2 (1.) xxxv. 22. The most striking parallel, however, is Ps. xxii. 20 (19.)

23 (22.) *Hasten to help me, (oh) Lord, my salvation!* The literal meaning of the first clause is *hasten to (or for) my help*. The same words form the last clause of Ps. xxii. 20 (19). *My salvation*, my deliverer, my saviour. This form of address bears a strong resemblance to the prayer in Ps. xxxv. 3: *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*.

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## PSALM XXXIX.

THIS psalm consists of two parts, in the first of which the Psalmist describes his feelings and his conduct at a former period, in relation to God's providential dealings, vs. 2—7 (1—6), while in the second he expresses what he now feels and believes in reference to the same subject, closing with an earnest appeal to the divine compassion, vs. 8—14 (7—13).

If this view of the structure of the psalm is just, the first part ought not to be quoted as an expression of pious feeling, but as an acknowledgment of sin and error. Some interpreters have gone so far as to affirm this of the whole psalm; but there seems to be an obvious change of tone and spirit in v. 8 (7.) There is no impropriety or danger in admitting that the psalms contain expressions of unhallowed feeling, if the admission be

restricted to those cases where the fact is indicated in the psalm itself, and not left to the discretion or caprice of the interpreter

1. *For the Chief Musician. For Jeduthun (or Jedithun) A psalm. By David.* The masoretic punctuation requires the first name to be read *Jeduthun*, while the text itself presents the form *Jedithun*. The same diversity appears in Ps. lxxvii. 1. 1 Chron. xvi. 38. Neh. xi. 17. The first form stands alone in 1 Chr. xvi. 41, 42. xxv. 1, 3. 2 Chron. v. 12. In all these places, it is the name of one of David's chief musicians or levitical singers, whose descendants held the same employment, as appears from Neh. xi. 17. The personal name is here added to the official title, perhaps for the purpose of doing honour to the individual, by connecting his name with this inspired composition, as in modern dedications and inscriptions.

2 (1.) *I said, I will keep my way, from sinning with my tongue; I will keep for my mouth a muzzle, while the wicked (is) before me.* Here begins the account of his former experience, but without any intimation of the time which had elapsed before he wrote. The two states of mind here described may have followed one another in immediate succession. *I said* to myself, implying a resolution, although this is not the meaning of the verb itself, as some allege. The idea of a fixed determination is moreover suggested by the form of the next verb, which is that of the paragogic future. *I will keep*, guard, preserve. *Take heed to*, although not incorrect, is an inadequate expression of the meaning. *My ways*, my course of conduct, my habitual behaviour. See above, on Ps. 1: 1. *From sinning*, so as not to sin, that I may not sin, a form in which this idea is frequently expressed in Hebrew. The word translated *muzzle* occurs only here, but its verbal root is used in Deut. xxv. 4, *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*, and in Ezek. xxxix 11, where it evidently



means to *stop*, either the nose or the way. The noun therefore must mean a stopper or a muzzle rather than a curb or bridle, by which some explain it. *While the wicked is before me*, or more literally, *in the wicked's (being) still before me*. If this referred merely to his personal presence, the verse would contain a resolution to avoid unguarded speeches in his company or hearing. But this is not the sin to which the Psalmist afterwards pleads guilty, and the true sense of the clause appears to be, while the prosperity of wicked men is still before my eyes, instead of vanishing at once as I expected. See above, Ps. xxxvii. 10. 36.—*For my mouth*, i. e. in reserve for it, or *to my mouth*, i. e. in actual contact with it.

3 (2.) *I was silenced (with) dumbness; I held my peace from good, and my sorrow was stirred*. The first clause is highly idiomatic, but the sense is clear, to wit, that he enjoined the strictest silence on himself, in reference to the providential mysteries which excited his envious discontent. The silence meant is abstinence from murmurs and repining against God. The second clause is obscure. *From good* is understood by some to mean *from every thing* because that idea is elsewhere expressed by the idiomatic combination, *good or evil*. See Gen. xxxi. 24, 29. 2 Sam. xiii. 22. But the antithesis in all such cases is essential, and the omission of one term destroys the meaning. Others give *from* a negative or privative sense, *away from good, without good*, i. e. without any good effect. But the simplest construction is the one given in the English Bible, *even from good*, or more fully in the Prayer Book version, *yea even from good words*. The meaning then is that in his anxiety to avoid the language of complaint against God, he was silent altogether, and suppressed even what he might have said without sin, or was in duty bound to say. The natural effect was that his inward grief, instead of being soothed, was roused, excited, and exasperated.

4 (3.) *Hot was my heart within me ; while I muse the fire is kindling ; (then) spake I with my tongue.* His compulsory silence only rendered more intense the feelings which it was intended to conceal. The less he said, the more he thought and felt, until at last it burst forth with more violence than if expressed at first. *My heart glowed, or was hot*, with angry discontent and envious repining. *Within me*, literally *in my inner part*, or *inside*, an emphatic phrase referring to the studied absence of all outward indications. Without, all seemed calm and cool ; within, his heart was in a glow on fire. *While I muse*, literally, *in my meditation*. See above, on Ps. v. 2. (1.) The future verb in this clause marks a transition. *The fire will burn*, or is about to burn, is kindling. The gradation is completed by the laconic phrase, *I spake*. 'I did what I had fully resolved not to do.' The reference to v. 2 is made more obvious by the additional words, *with my tongue*, which would else be unmeaning and superfluous. 'That very tongue, with which I had determined not to sin, I nevertheless spake with, in an unadvised and unbecoming manner.'

5 (4.) *Make me to know, (oh) Jehovah, my end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; let me know when I shall cease.* According to the view already taken of the first part of the psalm, this is not a prayer to be made duly sensible of the brevity of life, which would have been superfluous, but an impatient wish to know how soon its sufferings are to cease. The same sentiment is amplified in Job. vi. 8—12. vii. 7. xiv. 13. xvi. 21, 22. The last clause may also be translated, *let me know how ceasing*, i. e. frail or shortlived, *I (am.)* But the general drift of the passage favours the construction, *let me know (at) what (point), or (at) what (time), I (am) ceasing*, or about to cease. The indefinite pronoun (מֶה) has then the same sense as in the compound phrase (עַד-מֶה) *until what (point), until when, how long ?*

The verbal adjective (חֲדַל) as in other cases, is only a less usual participial form.

6 (5.) *Lo, (by) spans, or (as) hand-breadths, hast thou given my days, and my life (is) as nothing before thee. Only all vanity is every man constituted. Selah.* The idea of the first clause is, that God had dealt out life to him in the scantiest measure. Hence the verb *given* must be taken in its proper sense, and not in that of *placed* or *made*, which it sometimes has. See above, on Ps viii. 2 (1.) xxxiii. 7. The *lo* or *behold*, at the beginning, is expressive of surprise, not unmixed with indignation. As if he had said, ‘See how short a space thou hast allotted me.’—The word rendered *life* is not the common one, but that employed in Ps. xvii. 14, and here used in its primary sense of *duration* or continued existence.—*As nothing*, or more strictly, non-existence, nonentity. See above, on Ps. xiv. 1. ‘My duration is so short that I seem scarcely to exist at all.’ *Before thee*, not merely in thy estimation, but by thine authority & sovereign constitution. ‘I only appear in thy presence long enough to disappear.’ *Only all vanity*, consisting or composed of nothing else. The word translated *vanity* means primarily *breath*, but is transferred, by a natural figure, to any thing impalpable and evanescent. The whole phrase means *a mere breath*. *Every man*, or taking the Hebrew noun as a collective, *all mankind*. The participle at the end means fixed, established, constituted, ordained, and describes the brevity of life as something not fortuitous but comprehended in the divine purpose. The melancholy nature of the fact alleged, and perhaps the reasonableness of the complaint founded on it, are indicated by a meditative pause.

7 (6.) *Only in an image does a man walk; only (for) a breath do they make a noise; he hoards up and he knows not who will gather them.* So short and transient is man's life

that what he does, and what befalls him, seems to be not so much a reality, as a show, a picture, a phantasma, an ideal scene, in which he *walks about*, as one of the imaginary actors. *For a breath*, i. e. the time spent in a single respiration, an instant, a moment. Or *as a breath*, i. e. something intangible and momentary. Or *as vanity*, vainly, in vain, without use or effect. This last agrees best with the previous use of הָבֵל, and its frequent usage elsewhere, in the sense of *vanity*. What is said in the first clause of the individual is said in the second of the species, as indicated by the plural verb. The noise referred to is the bustling clamorous activity with which men seek for pleasure and especially for wealth. Hence the derivative noun, which properly means *noise*, has frequently the secondary sense of *wealth*. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 16. *Disquieted* is too weak, as denoting passive uneasiness rather than tumultuous exertion. In the last clause the plural is again exchanged for the singular, a clear proof that they both relate to the same subject. The first verb in this clause is applied elsewhere to the heaping up of earth (Hab. i. 10), the storing away of corn (Gen. xli. 35), and the hoarding of treasures (Job xxvii. 16), which is its sense here. *Who will gather them*, i. e. the hoarded treasures, not accumulate them, which is done already, but take them to himself, enjoy, or use them. The future verbs describe this as a process which may be expected to continue, and perhaps to last forever.

8 (7.) *And now what have I waited for? Lord, my hope is in thee.* The conclusion, to which the previous complaints seemed to tend, was that he would wait no longer, but abandon the hope of divine favour in despair. But this result did not ensue, and he asks, as if in wonder at his own inconsistency, how it is that he has waited after all, or still waits, for the good which seemed, a little while ago, so desperate. The answer is given in the other clause. His hope was, from the first, in

God, and although sorely tried, was not extinct. At this point it revives and recovers its ascendancy, and from this point he takes a new and more believing view of those very inequalities and riddles, which before so severely exercised his faith. This may therefore be regarded as the turning point of the whole psalm, the transition from a worse to a better state of feeling. *And now* may be strictly understood, in opposition to past time and to a previous state of mind. At the same time, it serves as a term of logical resumption and connexion, as in Ps. ii. 10. *Now*, i. e. since this is the case. *In thee*, literally, *to* (or *as to*) *thee*, the Hebrew particle denoting relation in the widest sense; the particular relation is suggested by the context. See above, on Ps. xxx. 2 (1.) The divine name, *Adhonai*, Lord, seems to belong more naturally to the second clause, although the masoretic interpunction joins it with the first. *And now, what wait I for, oh Lord?* The emphatic pronoun at the end of the sentence cannot well be imitated in translation. (*As for*) *my hope, in thee (is) it.*

9 (8.) *From all my transgressions free me; the reproach of the fool do not make me.* The first clause contains an implicit acknowledgment that his error was a sinful one. *Transgressions*, treasons, or apostacies, committed against God. The Hebrew word is much stronger than its English equivalent. In asking to be freed from his transgressions, he asks to be delivered from their consequences, one of which is then particularly mentioned. *A reproach*, an object of derision and contempt. See above, on Ps. xxii. 7 (6.) *The fool*, by way of eminence, the impious unbeliever. See above, on Ps. xiv. 1 *Do not make me*, literally, *place* (or *put*) *me*, i. e. set me up, exhibit, or expose me, as a mark for their invective or their ridicule.

10 (9.) *I am silenced, I will not open my mouth, because*

*thou hast done (it.)* This is far from being a reiteration of the statement in v. 3 (2) above. The common version of the second verb (*I opened not*) is altogether arbitrary, and even the first, although a preterite, does not mean *I was dumb*, i. e. at some former time, but *I have been silenced*, or *am dumb*, at present. There is obvious allusion to the similar expressions of v. 3 (2), but rather in the way of contrast than of repetition. As before he was kept silent by an obstinate suppression of the rebellious feelings which he really experienced, so now he is kept silent by a filial submission to his father's chastisements. *I will not open my mouth*, to murmur or give utterance to undutiful complaints. *Thou hast done* the very thing at which I was tempted to repine. See above, on Ps. xxii. 32 (31.) The pronoun is emphatic: (*it is*) *thou (who) hast done (it)*, and no other. See above, on Ps. xxx. 7 (6.) xxxiii. 9.

11 (10.) *Remove from upon me thy stroke; from the strife of thy hand I have wasted away (or consumed.)* The silence vowed in the preceding verse had reference merely to repining and undutiful complaint, not to prayer, which he immediately subjoins. *Remove*, or retaining the form of the original, *cause to remove*, make to depart, take away, withdraw, not merely *from me*, but *from upon me*, implying previous pressure. *Thy stroke*, thy chastisement, thy punishment. See above, on Ps. xxxviii. 12 (11.) The same thing is intended by *the strife of thy hand*, the judgments of God being sometimes represented as a controversy or contention between him and the afflicted person. See Isai. lxvi. 16. Ezek. xxxviii. 22. The last verb is not a passive but a neuter, as in Ps. xxxvii. 20. Here again the pronoun is emphatic. *I, even I*, and not merely men in general, know this by experience.

12 (11.) *With rebukes for iniquity thou dost chasten man, and waste like the moth what he desires. Only vanity is ever*



*man* (or *all mankind*.) *Selah*. He here presents his new and more correct view of God's providential strokes, which he has now learned to regard as the punishment of sin. The emphasis of the sentence rests upon the first clause. It is not with cruel and vindictive strokes, it is not with random and unmeaning blows, but with penal visitations, *with rebukes* (or *chastisements*) *for sin*, that thou dost chasten man. The past tense of the verb implies that what he suffers is but one link in a long chain of consistent uniform experiences. He is looking not at what has happened once or for the first time, but at something which has always been so. It is God's accustomed mode of dealing with his sinful creatures. The deduction of meanings in תּוֹכַחַת is first argument, then conviction, then condemnation, then punishment. See above, on Ps. xxxviii. 15 (14.)—*Waste*, literally, cause to melt away. The same verb is used above, Ps. vi. 7 (6), and below, Ps. clvii. 18.—*Like the moth*, not as the moth decays, but as the moth consumes. See Job iv. 19. xiii. 28. *What he desires*, literally, *his desired* or *desirable*, whatever he delights in. *Beauty* is too specific and confined a sense. The last clause, with the *selah* at the close, announces that the Psalmist has come back to the point from which he started, but, as we have seen, with an extraordinary change of views and feelings.

13 (12.) *Hear my prayer, (oh) Jehovah, and to my cry* (for help) *give ear; to my weeping be not silent, for a stranger (am) I with thee, a sojourner like all my fathers*. The word translated *weeping* properly means *tear*, but is always used collectively for *tears*. *Be not silent*, as an expression of indifference or hostility, not to be moved even by the sight of tears. *A stranger* and by implication homeless and friendless, wholly dependent on thy hospitable bounty. To a Hebrew, familiar with the Law of Moses, which continually joins the stranger with the widow and the orphan, as legitimate objects of com-

passionate regard, this description must have been peculiarly affecting. *With thee*, under thy roof, at thy fireside, or in scripture phrase, *within thy gates*, (Ex. xx. 10), i. e. at thy mercy, and dependent on thee. The parallel term (תושב) means one who has no land of his own, but is settled upon that of another, as a tenant, a vassal, or a beneficiary. The same description is applied by Abraham to himself (Gen. xxiii. 4), by Moses to all Israel, considered as the feudal subjects and dependents of Jehovah (Lev. xxv. 23), and by David to himself and his contemporaries (1 Chron. xxix. 15), on a different occasion from the one before us, and in a different connexion, thus affording a striking incidental confirmation of the truth of the inscription, which makes him the author of the psalm. See above, on v. 1. In both cases, the expression *like our fathers* shows the relation which the words describe to be not merely personal but national. Another interesting parallel is 1 Kings xix. 4, where Elijah, in a state of feeling not unlike the one recorded in the first part of this psalm, "requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, oh Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

14 (13.) *Look away from me and let me cheer up, before I go (hence) and am no more.* Both Hebrew words are causatives and seem to govern *face* understood. 'Cause thy face, thy angry countenance, to look away from me, and let me cheer up or exhilarate my own face.' The last clause in Hebrew is exceedingly laconic; the literal translation is, *before I go and am not*. It has been justly represented as remarkable, that all the words and phrases of this verse occur in different places of the book of Job. How long wilt thou not look away from me? (Job vii. 19.) Look away from him and let him cease (Job. xiv. 6.) Are not my days few? Cease then and let me alone, that I may cheer up a little, before I go (hence) and return no more (Job x. 20, 21.) Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not

. . . . . thou shalt seek me in the morning and I am not, or I shall not be (Job vii. 8, 21.) These repeated coincidences, not in common but comparatively rare expressions, together with the analogies already mentioned in the explanation of v. 5 (5) above, seem to show, not only that the writer of that book was acquainted with the psalm before us, but that the germ or seminal idea of the book itself is really included in this psalm. We have seen already that the thirty-seventh psalm sustains a similar relation to the Book of Proverbs. See above, p. 298. Thus the Psalter, and especially the Psalms of David, furnished themes and models to the inspired writers of a later date, while at the same time they abound themselves with allusions to the Pentateuch and imitations of it. This was the more natural, and even unavoidable, because the Books of Moses and the Psalms were especially familiar to all pious Jews from their incessant use in public worship. That the Book of Job is not, in this case, the original, is clear from the number and dispersion of the passages, in which this one Psalm is alluded to or copied.

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## PSALM XL.

THE Psalmist celebrates delivering grace, already experienced by himself and others, vs. 2—6 (1—5.) He declares his resolution to attest his gratitude, by deed as well as word, vs. 7—14 (6—13.) He prays that God will grant him new occasion of thanksgiving, by delivering him from present troubles, vs. 15—18 (14—17.) This psalm, like the sixteenth, twenty-second, and some others, seems to be so constructed that it may be applied

generically to the whole class of pious sufferers, but specific to its head and representative, the Messiah.

The reappearance of the last part of this psalm in the seventieth will be considered in the exposition of the latter.

1. *For the Chief Musician. By David. A Psalm.* This title, with a slight transposition, is the same with that of Ps. xiii. xix. xx. xxi. xxxi. It shows that the psalm was not, as might have been supposed from its contents, a mere expression of personal feeling, but designed for permanent and public use.

2 (1.) *I waited, waited for Jehovah, and he bowed (or inclined) unto me, and heard my cry.* The Psalm opens with the narrative of what the writer, or ideal speaker, had himself experienced. The emphatic repetition of the verb implies patient perseverance, and is perhaps exclusive of all other means. 'I simply waited; I did nothing but wait.' *Bowed himself*, or the heavens, as in Ps. xviii. 10 (9), or his ear, as in Ps. xvii. 6. xxxi. 3 (2), most probably the last. The image then presented is that of one leaning forward to catch a faint or distant sound. *My cry* for help. See above, on Ps. v. 3 (2). xviii. 7 (6.) xxxix. 13 (12.)

3 (2.) *And brought me up from a pit of noise, and from the miry clay, and made my feet stand on a rock; he fixed my steps.* The first verb in Hebrew is a causative, *he caused me to ascend*. The noise referred to seems to be that of water in a deep place. *Miry clay*, literally *clay of mire*, in which there can be no firm foot-hold, as there is upon the *rock*, with which it is contrasted. *Fixed*, established, rendered firm.

4 (3.) *And put in my mouth a new song, praise to our God, many shall see and shall fear, and shall trust in Jehovah.* In this, as in v. 3 (2), the construction is continued from the

foregoing sentence. *Put*, literally *gave, gave (to me) in my mouth*. See above, on Ps. iv. 8 (7.) *A new song*, implying a new subject or occasion. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 3. By the *new song*, we are not to understand this psalm exclusively, but *fresh praise*, of which this psalm is an instance or particular expression. *Our God*, the God of Israel, a further proof that his is not an expression of mere personal feeling, but a permanent formula of public praise. The effect of it, anticipated in the last clause, is the same as in Ps. xxii. 26—32. (25—31.) The original exhibits a paronomasia, which is lost in the translation, arising from the close resemblance of the verbs *see* and *fear* (רָאָה and יִירָאָה). The *fear* meant is that religious awe or reverence, which always accompanies true *faith* or trust in God

5 (4.) *Happy the man who has made Jehovah his trust, and has not looked to proud (men) and (those) swerving to falsehood*. From his own experience he draws a general conclusion, as to the safety and prosperity of those who trust in God. The first phrase is properly an exclamation, *oh the happinesses of the man*, as in Ps. i. 1. ii. 12. xxxii. 1, 2. xxxiii. 12. The next words in Hebrew have properly a local sense. *Who has set Jehovah (as) his place of security*, the form of the noun being one which has commonly a local meaning. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 1. The verb translated *looked* means strictly *turned round* towards an object for the purpose of looking at it. It may here imply confidence or trust, as cognate verbs do in Isaiah xvii. 7, 8. Or it may convey the additional idea of taking sides, espousing the cause, joining the party, of those *swerving*, turning aside, apostatizing, from the way of truth and duty, or from God himself. See above, on Ps. xiv. 3. xviii. 22 (21.)

6 (5.) *Many (things) hast thou done, Jehovah, my God*

*thy wonders and thy thoughts to us it is not (possible) to state unto thee; I would declare and speak (them; but) they are too many to be numbered.* This is not the only instance of the kind, but one of a great multitude. *Many things*, i. e. many such things. *My God*, as well as *our God*, i. e. in personal covenant with me, as well as in national covenant with Israel. See above, on v. 3 (2.) The combination of the two divine names suggests that Jehovah was not the God of Israel only, but the Supreme God. The word translated *wonders* is properly a passive participle, meaning (*things*) *made wonderful or wonderfully done*, and therefore constantly used absolutely as a noun in the sense of *wondrous deeds* or *wonderful works*. See above, Ps. ix. 2 (1.) xxvi. 7. *Thoughts*, purposes, and in this connexion, purposes of mercy. *To us*, towards us, respecting us, and for our benefit. The next words may also mean, *there is no resemblance (or comparison) to thee*, i. e. none to be compared with thee. See below, Ps. lxxxix. 7 (6), and compare Isai. xl. 18. Job xxviii. 17, 19. This use of the Hebrew word is founded on its primary sense of arranging, putting in order, with particular reference to the arrangement of the offerings and other sacred objects under the Mosaic law. Then it was used to signify the act of putting things together, side by side, and so comparing them. See above, on Ps. v. 4 (3), where it is figuratively applied to the presentation of a prayer, and compare its similar use in Isai. xlv. 7. Job xxxvii. 19. xxxii. 14, in the last of which places we have the phrase *to order* or *present words*. As this is a more frequent sense than that of resembling or comparing, and in this case agrees better with the words immediately before and after, it is safer to retain it. *I would declare*, literally, *I will declare*, the form of the verb being that of the paragogic future, which expresses in the first person strong resolution. This is more expressive than the hypothetical proposition, 'I would declare them, if I did not know it to be impossible.' The idea conveyed by the original



expression is that of an actual attempt and failure. As if he had said: 'Yes, I will declare and tell thy wondrous works; but no, they are too many to be numbered or recounted.' For the meaning of the last verb, see above, on Ps. ii. 7, ix. 2, 15 (1, 14.) xix. 2 (1.) xxii. 18, 23 (17, 22.) xxvi. 7.

7-(6.) *Sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired; my ears thou hast pierced. Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not asked.* Here begins his account of the way in which his gratitude should be expressed. This is first negatively stated—not by mere oblations or other ceremonial rites. To express this idea he combines four technical expressions of the Law. The first two are the usual descriptions of animal and vegetable offerings. The first means any thing slaughtered for a sacrificial purpose. The second means originally any gift, but is appropriated, in the Law, to those secondary offerings of corn, oil, wine, and incense, which accompanied the animal oblations. In the English Version of the Pentateuch it is rendered *meat-offering*, a version which no longer conveys the correct meaning to the common reader, since these were precisely the offerings from which *meat*, in the modern sense of *flesh*, was entirely excluded. In this case, however, the Hebrew word is joined with that before it to describe the two great kinds of offering, animal and vegetable. The parallel terms in the last clause are those denoting the general expiatory sacrifice statedly offered, and the special sacrifice in reference to particular offences. The last words of the first clause are exceedingly obscure. The Hebrew verb elsewhere means *to dig*, and is so used in Ps. vii. 16 (15) above. It may be naturally used however to denote the act of piercing, perforating. Some suppose it to mean opening the ear or causing one to hear, and understand the whole phrase as meaning, 'thou hast told me so, or hast revealed it to me.' This is favoured by the use of cognate phrases to express the same idea, such as opening, uncovering, awakening.

the ear, &c. See Isai. l. 4, 5. 1 Sam. ix. 15. xx. 2, 12. xxii. 8. It is more probable however that the strong expression here used was intended to suggest the additional idea of obeying or rendering obedient, which is often expressed even by the simple verb to *hear*. The peculiar figurative form in which the thought is clothed may be accounted for, by supposing an allusion to the ceremony of boring a slave's ear with an awl, as a symbol of perpetual obedience. See Ex. xxi. 6. The whole verse may then be paraphrased as follows: 'thou hast not required ceremonial services, but obedience, and hast pierced my ear, as a sign that I will hear thee and obey thee forever.' The Septuagint version of this clause (*a body hast thou prepared me*) is retained in the New Testament as an unimportant variation, i. e. in reference to the writer's purpose in making the quotation, and perhaps as suggesting that the incarnation of the Son was a prerequisite to his obedience. The contrast intended is between ceremonial rites in themselves considered, and the obedience, of which they only formed a part, and from which they could not be severed without rendering them worthless. There is obvious allusion to 1 Sam. xv. 22, not only here but in the parallel passages, Ps. li. 18, 19 (16, 17.) Hos. vi. 6 Isai. i. 12. Jer. vii. 22—24.

8 (7.) *Then I said, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me.* The first word refers not so much to time as to other circumstances. *Then*, in these circumstances, this being the case. Seeing and knowing that mere ceremonial services are worthless, *I come*, I bring myself, all that I have and am, as a rational or spiritual service. (Rom. xii. 1.) *The volume of the book, or the roll of scripture.* The second noun is the one used in Hebrew to denote the written revelation of God's will, and the first to describe the form of an ancient oriental book, not unlike that of a modern map, and still retained in the manuscripts used in the synagogue worship. The refer

ence is here to the Law of Moses. *Written of me* is by some referred to prophecy, by others to the requisitions of the Law. The literal meaning of the Hebrew words is *written upon me*, i. e. prescribed to me, the *upon* suggesting the idea of an incumbent obligation. 'Enjoined upon me by a written precept.' This is clearly the meaning of the same phrase in 2 Kings xxii. 13. Thus understood, the clause before us may be paraphrased as follows. 'Since the ceremonies of the Law are worthless, when divorced from habitual obedience, instead of offering mere sacrifice I offer myself, to do whatever is prescribed to me in the written revelation of thy will.' This is the spirit of every true believer, and is therefore perfectly appropriate to the whole class, to whom this psalm relates, and for whom it was intended. It is peculiarly significant, however, when applied to Christ; first, because he alone possessed this spirit in perfection; secondly, because he sustained a peculiar relation to the rites, and more especially the sacrifices, of the Law. David, or any other individual believer under the old economy, was bound to bring himself as an oblation, in completion or in lieu of his external gifts; but such self-devotion was peculiarly important upon Christ's part, as the real sacrifice, of which those rites were only figures. The failure of any individual to render this essential offering ensured his own destruction. But if Christ had failed to do the same, all his followers must have perished. It is not, therefore, an accommodation of the passage to a subject altogether different, but an exposition of it in its highest application, that is given in Heb. x. 5—10. The limitation of the words to Christ, as an exclusive Messianic prophecy, has the twofold inconvenience of forbidding its use by the large class of godly sufferers, for whom it seems so admirably suited, and of requiring us to understand even the confession of sins as uttered in his person. See below, on v. 13 (12.)

9 (8.) *To do thy will, my God, I have delighted (or desired)*

*and thy law (is) in the midst of my bowels.* The self-devotion, just professed, is now described as a cordial and spontaneous act, because the law requiring it is not regarded as a mere external rule, but as existing in the heart and coinciding with the will. This, which is true, in measure, of all genuine obedience, is pre-eminently true of that obedience unto death, by which Christ magnified the law and honoured it, proved his own zeal for God and deference to his will, and wrought out that salvation, which alone can render similar obedience upon man's part possible. With the last clause compare Ps. xxxvii. 31. Deut. xx. 14. Prov. iii. 3. vii. 3. Isai. li. 7. This verse, together with the one before it, on which it is a kind of comment, holds up to view the sincere obedience of the true believer, including the observance of commanded rites, in contrast with the formal hypocritical observance of the rites alone, and at the same time the perfect obedience and self-sacrifice of Christ in contrast with the types by which they were prefigured.

10 (9.) *I have proclaimed righteousness in a great assembly. Lo, my lips I will not restrain; Jehovah, thou knowest (or hast known.)* The first verb is the nearest Hebrew equivalent to the Greek *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, to announce good news, to proclaim glad tidings. The *righteousness* meant is that of God. The *great congregation* or *assembly* is his church or people. *Restrain*, i. e. from still proclaiming it. The past tense in the first clause shows this to be, not a mere engagement or a promise, but a statement of what has been already done. The future following completes the statement, by providing also for the time to come. The return to the preterite in the last clause appeals to God's omniscience for the truth of what was first alleged, as well as of the promise just recorded. 'Thou hast already been a witness of my zeal in the annunciation of thy righteousness, and art a witness, at this moment, of the sincerity with which I vow that it shall be continued.'

11 (10.) *Thy righteousness I have not hid in the midst of my heart ; thy faithfulness and thy salvation I have uttered ; I have not concealed thy mercy and thy truth from the great congregation (or assembly.)* The same idea is again expressed, but with a pointed allusion to the last clause of v. 9 (8), as if to guard against a misconstruction of its language. In opposition to a mere external formal service, he had there said that the Law of God was in his heart. But now he hastens, as it were, to add, that it was not confined there. He was not contented with his own impressions of God's righteousness, derived both from his word and from his providence. He considered himself bound to make it known to the whole body of God's people, for the twofold purpose of comforting and edifying them, and of promoting the divine glory. The expression of the same thing both in negative and positive form is a natural method of enforcing what is said, which is common to all languages, although particularly frequent in the Hebrew.

12 (11.) *Thou, Jehovah, wilt not withhold thy compassions from me ; thy mercy and thy truth will always preserve me.* This is not a prayer, as it seems to be in the common version, but an expression of strong confidence, like that in Ps. xxiii. 6. As if he had said, 'I am sure that thou wilt not withhold,' &c. Here again there is an obvious allusion to a previous expression. As he had said in v. 10 (9), *my lips I will not restrain*, so now he says, *and thou, oh Lord, (on thy part) wilt not restrain thy mercies from me.* The phrase supplied, *on thy part*, is really included in the pronoun *thou*, which, being unnecessary to the sense, must be emphatic. See above, on Ps. ii. 6. *Thy compassions*, tender mercies, warm affections. See above, on Ps. xxv. 6, and compare Ps. xviii. 2 (1.) *Truth* means the veracity of God's engagements, as in the preceding verse, where it is joined with *faithfulness*, fidelity. *Preserve me* from dis

tresses, dangers, enemies. See above, Ps. xii. 8 (7.) xxxi. 24 (23.) xxxii. 7.

13 (12.) *For upon me have gathered evils till there is no number; my sins have overtaken me, and I am not able to see; they are more than the hairs of my head and my heart has failed me.* The original expression in the first clause, to surround upon, is a strong one to denote an accumulation of evils from all quarters. This is intended to account for the necessity of protection and deliverance, implied in the last clause of the verse preceding. It introduces the prayer for relief from present troubles, founded on previous experience of God's mercy, and forming the conclusion of the psalm. *Sins*, not punishments, although the experience here described is that of their effects. *Overtaken*, reached after long delay and hope of escape. See Deut. xxviii. 15. The common version, *cannot look up*, gives a meaning which the Hebrew phrase never has elsewhere. It always denotes dimness or failure of sight, arising from distress, weakness, or old age. See 1 Sam. iii. 2. iv. 15. 1 Kings xiv. 4, and compare Ps. vi. 8 (7.) xiii. 4 (3.) xxxi. 10 (9.) xxxviii. 11 (10.) *More than the hairs of my head.* See below, Ps. lxix. 5 (4.) *My heart has failed me*, literally, *left me*. See above, on Ps. xxxviii. 11 (10), where the same thing is said of his *strength*. This picture of complicated sufferings produced by his own sins is inapplicable to the Saviour, who neither in prophecy nor history ever calls the sins for which he suffered *my sins*.

14 (13.) *Be pleased, (oh) Jehovah, to deliver me; (oh) Jehovah, to my help make haste!* The first clause contains an implied acknowledgment of dependence on God's mercy. In the second, the form of expression is the same as in Ps. xxii 20 (19.)



15 (14.) *Ashamed and confounded together shall be (those) seeking my soul to destroy it ; turned back and disgraced shall be (those) desiring (or delighting in) my hurt.* Strictly speaking, this is not so much the expression of a wish as of a confident expectation. See above, on v. 12 (11.) But its intimate connexion with the foregoing prayer seems to give it the force of an optative. The wish implied, is precisely the same as in Ps. xxxv. 4, 26.

16 (15.) *They shall be desolate on account of their shame—those saying to me, Aha, aha!* The common version, *for a reward of their shame*, seems to make their shame the crime for which they were to be punished. The Hebrew word (עֲקָב) sometimes means wages or reward, as the *consequence* of labour. See Ps. xix. 12 (11.) Prov. xxii. 4. But the general meaning of the phrase, *in consequence*, is admissible and quite sufficient here. For the meaning of the last clause, see above, on Ps xxxv. 21, 25.

17 (16.) *They shall rejoice and be glad in thee—all (those) seeking thee. They shall say always, Great be Jehovah—(those) loving thy salvation.* The structure of the clauses is alike, each beginning with the action and ending with a description of the agent. The joy and praise are represented as the fruit of the deliverance here prayed for. *In thee*, in communion with thee, in the enjoyment of thy favour. *Seeking thee*, seeking that communion and that favour. *Great is Jehovah*, or *the Lord be magnified*, i. e. recognised as great and glorious. *Loving thy salvation*, not merely desiring it for themselves, but rejoicing in it as bestowed on others. See above, Ps. xxxv. 27, and compare xxii. 24 (23.) lxix. 33 (32.)

18 (17.) *And I (am) afflicted and poor, and the Lord will think of me (or for me). My help and my deliverer (art) thou*

*Oh my God, do not delay.* The connexion is the same as in Ps. ii. 6 above. 'And (yet) I am a sufferer and poor; and (yet) the Lord will think,' &c. The Hebrew phrase (יִדְחַשׁב לִי) may either mean, *will think respecting (or concerning) me*, i. e. remember me, attend to me—or *will think for me*, i. e. plan, provide, for me. *My help art thou*, and therefore canst not fail to help me; *my deliverer*, and therefore must deliver me. See above, on Ps. iii. 4 (3.) The same thing is implied in the address, *my God*. See above, on vs. 4, 6 (3, 5.) *Do not tarry*, linger, or delay to grant this prayer.

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## PSALM XLI.

1. *To the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.* This psalm, though intended like all the rest for permanent and public use, exhibits very strong marks of the personal experience of the author. He first states a general rule of the divine dispensations, namely, that the merciful shall obtain mercy, vs. 2—4 (1—3.) He then claims the benefit of this law in his own case, which is described as one of great suffering from sickness and the spite of wicked enemies, vs. 5—10 (4—9.) He concludes with an earnest prayer to God for succour, and expresses a strong confidence that he shall receive it, vs. 11—14 (10—13.)

The juxtaposition of this psalm with that before it is not fortuitous, but founded on their common resemblance to the thirty-fifth, and on their mutual resemblance as generic descriptions of the sufferings of the righteous, with specific reference

to those of the Messiah, as the head and representative of the whole class. In this, as in the fortieth psalm, the exclusive reference to Christ is forbidden, by its obvious adaptation to a whole class, and by the explicit confession of sin in v. 6 (5.)

2 (1.) *Happy (the man) acting wisely towards the poor (man); in the day of evil Jehovah will deliver him.* The form of expression at the beginning is the same as in Ps. i. 1. xl. 5 (4.) As the first verb sometimes has the sense of *attending* or *attentively considering*, some understand it to mean here *considering* (or *attending to*) *the poor*. But its proper import of *acting prudently* (or *wisely*) is entirely appropriate, and therefore entitled to the preference. See above, on Ps. ii. 10. xiv. 2. What is meant by *acting wisely towards the poor*, may be gathered from the parallel passage, Ps. xxxv. 13, 14. The principle assumed is that expressed by our Saviour in Matt. v. 7. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 28. *The poor*, in the wide sense of the English word, corresponding very nearly to that of the Hebrew עָנִי, which means poor in flesh (Gen. xli. 19), and poor in strength (2 Sam. iii. 1), as well as poor in point of property and social standing (Ex. xxiii. 3.) It here includes all forms of want and suffering, and might be translated *wretched*. This is not a mere reflection on the unkindness of his own acquaintances, but an indirect assertion of his own benevolence. ‘Happy the man acting wisely towards the poor—as I have done. In the day of evil, of his own misfortune, when his own turn comes to suffer, the Lord will deliver him—as I desire and expect to be delivered.’

3 (2.) *Jehovah will keep him and save him alive; he shall be prospered in the land; and do not thou give him up to the will of his enemies.* What he has done for others the Lord will do for him. *Save him alive*: the same verb occurs above

in Ps. xxii. 30 (29.) *Prospered*: the Hebrew verb (יָאֲשֵׁר) originally means *led straight*, or in a straight path. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 3. But here it has the same sense as in Prov. iii. 18. The marginal reading in the Hebrew Bible (יָאֲשֵׁר) only differs from the text by introducing the conjunction *and* *In the land*, i. e. the land of promise. See above, on Ps. xxv. 13. xxxvii. 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. These are general propositions, but are evidently meant to be applied specifically to himself. His solicitude respecting the event is betrayed by his sudden transition from prediction to petition. *Give him up to the will*, literally, *into the soul*, here put for the desire or appetite. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 12, and compare Ps. xvii. 9.

4 (3.) *Jehovah will support him on the couch of languor; all his bed hast thou turned in his sickness.* The images are borrowed from the usages of real life. The first is that of holding a sufferer up, sustaining him, in pain and weakness; the other that of changing, making, or adjusting his bed. The parallelism favours this interpretation of the second clause much more than that which makes it mean 'thou hast converted all his sickness into health.' The words translated *couch* and *languor* are unusual equivalents to *bed* and *sickness* in the other clause.

5 (4.) *I have said, Jehovah, have mercy upon me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* The pronoun at the beginning is emphatic. He is here applying to himself the doctrine which he had before laid down in general terms. 'Knowing this to be the rule of the divine administration, I myself have claimed the benefit of it; I myself have said, &c.' There is no need of diluting the past tense into a present. The use of the preterite implies that it is not an act yet to be performed, but one that has been done already. The same emphasis, though not required by the form of the original, may

be supposed to rest upon the *me* and the *my*. The prayer for the healing of his soul may be considered as including that for the removal of his bodily disease, which seems to be referred to in this psalm as a mere consequence of inward agony. And this is itself referred to sin as its occasion in the last clause of the verse. The intimate connexion between sin and suffering is continually recognised by David. See above, Ps. xxxi. 11 (10.) xxxii. 5. xxxviii. 4, 5, 19 (3, 4, 18.) xl. 13 (12). *Against thee*, literally, *to thee, as to thee*. The idea of direct opposition is suggested by the context. See above, on Ps. xxx. 2 (1.) xxxv. 19, 24. xxxviii. 17 (16.)

6 (5.) *My enemies will say evil to (or as to) me: when shall he die and his name perish?* The word translated *evil* is constantly applied to moral evil, and here means spite or malice. The ambiguous phrase *to me* seems to include the two ideas of speaking of him and in his hearing, or as we say in familiar English, *talking at him*. See above, on Ps. iii. 3 (2.) xi. 1. The question in the second clause implies impatience. With the last phrase compare Ps. ix. 7 (6.)

7 (6.) *And if he come to see me, falsehood he will speak; (in) his heart he is gathering mischief; he will go out, to the street (or out of doors) he will speak (or tell it.)* The subject of the sentence is his enemy viewed as an ideal person. Compare the alternation of the singular and plural forms in vs. 6 (5) and 12 (11.) *If he come*, literally, *has come*, at any former time; or still better, if he has come now, if he is now here, the scene being then described as actually present to the writer's senses, which adds greatly to its graphic vividness and beauty. *To see*, not merely *to see me*, in the usual sense of *visiting*, which is rather an English than a Hebrew idiom, but *to see for himself*, to observe, to play the spy, to watch the progress of the malady, and judge how soon a fatal termination may be looked

for. *Falsehood*, vanity, in the strong scriptural sense of emptiness, hypocrisy, false professions (in this case) of sympathy and friendly interest. *He will speak*: I am sure that he will do so; I know him too well to doubt it for a moment. The idea thus suggested by the future is entirely lost by exchanging it for the present, which it really includes, but something in addition. The construction, *his heart gathereth*, is at variance with the Masoretic accents, and does not yield so good a sense as that which makes *his heart* an adverbial phrase, a Hebrew idiom of perpetual occurrence. In our idiom it will then mean *in* (or *as to*) *his heart*, as opposed to the outward appearance of benevolence and friendship. The second future (יִקְבֹּץ) may be either construed like the first, *he* (certainly) *will gather*, (I know that) *he will gather*; or understood to signify an action which has been begun but is not finished, *he is gathering*. To gather mischief is, in this connexion, to collect materials for calumnious reports. *He will go out, he will speak*, or as we should say in English, *when he goes out he will speak*. The Hebrew verb itself (יֵצֵא) means to *go out*. The additional phrase means strictly *to the street*, or *to the outside* of the house. It might be grammatically construed with the verb before it, *he will go out to the street*. But the accents connect it with the verb that follows, *to the street he will tell (it)*, or *to the outside*, i. e. to those without, who are perhaps to be conceived of, as impatiently awaiting his report.

8 (7.) *Together against me they will whisper—all (those) hating me; against me they will meditate—injury to me.* The collocation in the first clause is like that in Ps. xl. 15—17 (14—16), the action being first described, and then the actors. The future has the same force as in the first clause of vs. 6, 7 (5, 6.) They will certainly persist in doing as they now do. The substitution of the present in translation conveys only half of this idea. The last word in Hebrew (יָרִי) is omitted in



most versions, though expressed in the margin of the English Bible. It defines the *evil* meditated, not as evil in the abstract or in general, but as evil to the sufferer, i. e. injury, which is the usual meaning of the Hebrew word (רָעָה), a modified form of (רָע) the one used in v. 6 (5) to denote moral evil. The last words are a kind of after thought—*Against me they will meditate* or *plot*, is a complete proposition in itself, which is then made more explicit by mentioning the object of their plots, *namely, evil (or injury) to me*. This form of the sentence may have been adopted to render the resemblance in the structure of the clauses more complete.

9 (8.) *A word of Belial is poured into him, and he who lies (there) shall arise no more*. These are the words of his malignant visiters, either uttered in his presence, or to their companions after leaving him. The literal translation of the first clause is given, to show its obscurity, and enable the reader to understand the different explanations of it which have been proposed. Some give *word* its not unfrequent idiomatic sense of *thing, affair* (1 Sam. x. 2. 2 Sam. xi. 18, 19. Ps. cv. 27), and *Belial* that of *ruin or destruction*, which they suppose it to have in Nah. i. 11, and Ps. xviii. 5 (4) above. But there, as elsewhere, it is better to retain its primary meaning, *good for nothing, worthless*, or as an abstract, *worthlessness*, a strong though negative expression for depravity. The whole phrase will then mean a *wicked matter, a depraved affair*. By this again some understand the disease with which he was afflicted, and which is then described as the result of his own wickedness; others the plan or plot devised by the speakers for the ruin of the sufferer. But this would hardly be described by themselves as a depraved affair. None of these explanations seems so natural or so exact, as that which gives to both words their customary meaning and understands *by a word of Belial* a disgraceful charge or infamous reproach

which is then represented as the cause of his distress and his approaching death. The next phrase may either mean *poured into* his mind or soul, as a moral poison, producing agony and death; or *poured upon* him, so as to submerge or overwhelm him. In Job xli. 15, 16 (23, 24), the same participle (רָצוּק) seems to be thrice used in the sense of poured out, melted, soldered, firmly fastened. So here the English Bible renders it *cleaveth fast unto him*, and the same meaning is assumed by some who understand by the preceding words a wicked plot or a destructive visitation, which is then described as cleaving fast to him so that he cannot shake it off or otherwise escape from it. The common version of the next words, *now that he lieth*, is extremely forced. The only natural construction of the relative is that which refers it to the sufferer himself. *He who has lain down shall not add to rise*, the common Hebrew method of expressing a continued or repeated action. See above, on Ps. x. 18. The expression becomes still more graphic if we understand it to mean *he who is lying* (here before you), or *he who lies there*, i. e. in yonder house or chamber.

10 (9.) *Even the man of my peace—whom I confided in—eating my bread—has lifted against me the heel.* The first word properly means *also*. Not only foes, but *also* friends; not only strangers, but *likewise* they of my own household. *The man of my peace*, or *my man of peace*, is a strong idiomatic expression for the man with whom I was at peace. As to the construction, see above, on Ps. ii. 6. *Eating my bread*, not merely as a guest, but as a dependent. Such must have been the current usage of the phrase in David's time. See 2 Sam. ix. 11, 13. xix. 29 (28), and compare 1 Kings xviii. 19. *Lifted*, literally *magnified* or made great. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 26. xxxviii. 17 (16.) The act described seems to be one of contemptuous violence, but probably with an implicit allusion to supplanting as an act of treachery. Our Lord applies

this verse expressly to himself and Judas (John xiii. 18), which shows that He was really included in the class to which the psalm relates. It is remarkable, however, that he only quotes the second of the three descriptive phrases, *eating my bread*, enjoying my society and subsisting on my bounty, while he omits the other two, because these would have represented Judas as his friend, and one in whom he trusted. But he knew from the beginning who it was that should betray him (John vi. 64.) This accurate distinction seems to confirm the assumption that the psalm has a generic meaning, and is only applicable to our Saviour as the most illustrious representative of the class which it describes. The allusion to Judas would be still more striking if, as some suppose, the phrase *man of my peace* had reference to the customary use of the word *peace* in salutation. He who was wont to wish me peace or to say, Peace be with thee. Compare Matth. xxvi. 49. But this, although ingenious, is by no means an obvious or natural interpretation.

11 (10.) *And thou, Jehovah, have mercy upon me, and cause me to arise, and I will repay them.* The connexion between this verse and the one before it can be fully expressed in English only by a *but* at the beginning of the sentence. The pronoun is emphatic, *thou*, on thy part, as distinguished from these spiteful enemies. He here resumes the prayer begun in v. 5 (4) and interrupted by the description of the malice of his enemies. *Make me to rise*, help me up from this bed of weakness and suffering, with obvious allusion to their having said that he would never rise again, v. 9 (8.) ‘Oh Lord, do what they pronounce impossible.’ The last words of this verse seem at first sight inconsistent with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness, as laid down in Matth. v. 39, 40. Rom. xii. 19. (Compare 1 Pet. ii. 23.) But as this is also an Old Testament doctrine (see (Prov. xx. 22), as David himself recognised the principle, Ps. vii. 5 (4), and acted on it, as appears from 2 Sam xix.

24 (23), the disagreement can be only an apparent one. It may be partially removed by observing, that the speaker here is neither Christ nor David in his proper person, but an ideal character, representing the whole class of righteous sufferers, so that what is here said really amounts to little more than a prediction that the malignant persecutors of this class shall be requited. In the next place, let it be observed that it is not said how he will repay them, whether by punishment or by heaping coals of fire upon their heads, according to Solomon's and Paul's directions. (Prov. xxv. 21, 22. Rom. xii. 20, 21.) Lastly, the rule laid down by Christ himself admits of righteous retribution, not only on the part of magistrates and rulers, but of private persons, where the means employed are lawful in themselves, and where their use is prompted, not by selfish pride or a revengeful malice, but by a desire to prevent a greater evil, to assert God's honour, and even to benefit the offender himself.

12 (11.) *By this have I known that thou hast delighted in me, because my enemy is not to triumph over me.* This implies a previous divine assurance, that his enemy should not so triumph. For a similar intimation, see above, Ps. xx. 7 (6.) The certainty thus afforded is expressed by the past tenses of the two first verbs. 'Since thou hast assured me that my enemy is not to triumph over me, I know already that thou hast even heretofore regarded me with favour.' The original expression is a very strong one and denotes not only preference but warm and tender affection. See Gen. xxxiv. 19, where it first occurs. The last verb means properly to shout or make a noise as a sign of exultation, more especially in war. See 1 Sam. xvii. 20.

13 (12.) *And as for me—in my integrity thou hast held me, and hast made me stand before thy face forever.* The first phrase literally means *and I*, as if agreeing with some verb

suppressed, or as if the construction had been suddenly changed from *I have been held* to *thou hast held me*. The integrity here claimed is not absolute or sinless perfection, as appears from the confession in v. 5 (4), but freedom from essential or fatal defect. See above, on Ps. xviii. 21—25 (20—24.) *In my integrity*, not simply *on account of it*, which is rather implied than expressed, but in the possession and exercise of it. *Thou hast held* may either mean *held fast* or *held up*, but the first seems to be the essential meaning of the verb, and really involves or at least suggests the other. ‘Thou hast so held me fast as to hold me up. By retaining thy hold upon me thou hast sustained me.’ *Setting before the face* seems here to mean making one the object of attention, keeping constantly in view. The reciprocal act of man towards God is spoken of in Ps. xvi. 8. As man sets God before him as an object of trust, so God sets man before him as an object of protection. That this is not to be a transient but a permanent relation, is implied in the future form of the verb, and expressed in the adverbial phrase *forever*.

14 (13.) *Blessed (be) Jehovah, the God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.* In such connexions, *blessed* is nearly synonymous with *praised* or *glorified*. In the sense of *happy*, the Hebrew word can only be applied to creatures. *From the perpetuity* (already past) *and even to the perpetuity* (to come), is a paradoxical but strong expression for unlimited duration. *Amen* is a Hebrew verbal adjective meaning *firm, sure, certain, true*. It is used as an expression of assent, just as we use *right, good*, and *true* itself, for the same purpose. It was uttered by the people as an audible response, not only in the time of Moses (Num. v. 22. Dent. xxvii. 15—26) and of David (1 Chron. xvi. 36), but after the return from exile (Neh. v. 13. viii. 6), and under the New Testament (1 Cor. xiv. 16.) Its repetition here and elsewhere simply makes it more emphatic and expressive of a stronger and more

cordial acquiescence. The doxology before us marks the close of the first of the five books into which the Psalter is divided. See below, on Ps. lxxii. 19. lxxxix. 53 (52.) cvi. 48.

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## PSALM XLII.

1. *To the Chief Musician. Maschil. To the Sons of Korah.* The obvious reference to personal experience and feelings in this Psalm made it the more necessary to designate it as a *maschil* or didactic Psalm, intended for permanent and public use. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. The experience described is evidently that of David, and most probably at the time of his exclusion from the sanctuary in consequence of Absalom's rebellion. See 2 Sam. xv. 25. The only doubt is, whether the psalm was composed by him or by the Sons of Korah. These were a Levitical family of singers, 1 Chron. vi. 1, 7, 16 (16, 22, 31.) ix. 19. xxvi. 1, who still continued that employment in the reign of Jehoshaphat, as appears from 2 Chron. xx. 19. This being their office, it would seem more natural to regard them as the performers rather than the authors of the psalm. It seems improbable, moreover, that the composition should be ascribed to a whole class or family. On the other hand, the *Sons of Korah* are here separated from the *Chief Musician*, and occupy precisely that place where we usually find the author's name. It is also remarkable that we never find the *Sons of Korah* named with David or any other individual author except Heman, who was probably one of themselves. See below, on Ps. lxxxviii. 1. If he, or any other of the *Sons of Korah*, be regarded as the



author of the Psalm before us, he must be supposed to have composed it in the person of David, i. e. to express David's feelings at a particular juncture of his history. It is, of course, a much more obvious supposition, that David himself wrote it for this purpose. Nor can the intrinsic probability of this supposition be destroyed, although it may undoubtedly be weakened, by the difficulty of accounting for the fact, that David's name is never mentioned in the titles of any of the eleven Psalms inscribed to the *Sons of Korah*. The psalm before us is divided by its structure into two parts, marked by the burden or *refrain* in vs. 6, 12 (5, 11.) In the first, he laments his exclusion from God's presence, vs. 2, 3 (1, 2,) aggravated by the taunts of his enemies, and the recollection of his former privileges, v. 4 (3), but confidently anticipates their restoration, and calls upon his soul to hope and trust in God, vs. 5, 6 (4, 5.) In the second, he goes over the same ground, though not in the same words, vs. 7, 11 (6, 10), and closes with the same expression of confidence as before, v. 12 (11.)

2 (1.) *As a hart panteth after streams of water, so panteth my soul for thee, (oh) God.* The first noun is masculine but the verb feminine, so that we may either read *hart* or *hind*. The verb occurs only here and in Joel i. 20, which is evidently copied from the verse before us. The allusion may be either to the exhaustion caused by flight, or to the natural effects of drought. See below, on Ps. lxiii. 2 (1.) The essential idea is that of intense desire and an overwhelming sense of want. *Streams of water*, water-brooks. See above, on Ps. xviii. 16 (15.)

3 (2.) *Thirsted has my soul for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?* The past tense of the first verb shows that he is not expressing a desire just conceived for the first time, but one with which he is already

familiar. Of the two divine names here used, one (Elohim) describes God as an object of religious worship, the other (El) as a Being of infinite power. He is Living and Mighty, as distinguished from imaginary deities, and from impotent and lifeless, idols. *When shall I come?* implies a local, bodily approach, and this agrees with the following phrase, *appear before God*, which is the technical expression in the Law for stated appearance at the sanctuary, except that the divine name Jehovah is exchanged for Elohim, which occurs ten times in this psalm, and Jehovah only once.

4 (3.) *My tears have been my bread day and night, in (their) saying to me all the day, Where (is) thy God?* The word translated *tears* is the collective term used in Ps. xxxix. 13 (12.) The Hebrew verb is in the singular. 'My weeping has been my bread,' i. e. my food. 'Instead of eating I have wept.' See below, Ps. cii. 5 (4), and compare 1 Sam. i. 7. Job iii. 24. *Day and night, all the day*, are strong but common phrases for continually, constantly. See above, on Ps. i. 2. *In saying*, i. e. in the time of saying, while it is said. Or a pronoun may be supplied, *in (their) saying*, while they say, i. e. his enemies. *Where is thy God?* The very question is an indirect assertion that God had forsaken him. See above, Ps. iii. 3 (2.) xxii. 9 (8), and below, Ps. lxxi. 11, cxv. 2, and compare Joel ii. 17. The words of Shimei may have been present to the mind of David. See 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8.

5 (4) *These (things) I will remember and will pour out upon me my soul, when I pass in the crowd, (when) I march (with) them up to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with festive noise (or tumult.)* This is the only construction of the sentence which gives the future forms their proper force instead of converting them into past tenses, which is wholly arbitrary, and therefore ungrammatical. If the last

clause contained a reminiscence of his former privileges, there was nothing whatever to prevent the use of the preterite forms. *These things*, not his former enjoyments, but his present sufferings. *I will remember*, I am determined so to do, this idea being suggested by the very form of the Hebrew verb. If the verse related only to the past, this strong expression would be out of place. The act of reflection or self-introversion is expressed by the strong figure of pouring out his soul upon himself, which at the same time suggests the idea of lively emotion; not necessarily of grief, as in Job xxx. 16, but of mingled joy and sadness in the recollection of past sufferings and deliverances, just as we might speak of a man's heart being melted, either with sorrow or gratitude, or both. *When I pass*, or still more literally, *for I shall pass*, which in that case expresses the confident expectation of a favourable issue. *Pass*, i. e. pass along in solemn procession. *The crowd*, or throng, the Hebrew word suggesting, by its etymological affinities, the idea of a thicket, and then of a confused mass. The verb translated *march* occurs only here and in Isai. xxxviii. 15, where it seems to be borrowed from the place before us. Its construction is like that of the English *march*, which, though commonly intransitive, in some cases governs the noun directly. If we render it here, *I shall march them*, it conveys the additional idea of conducting as well as joining the procession. *Up to*, a stronger expression than *to*, implying actual arrival at the place in question. The use of music in the processions to the temple may be inferred from 2 Sam. vi. 5. The word translated *noise* or *tumult* may also mean the *multitude* by whom it is produced. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 16. xxxix. 7 (6.) But the other is the primary meaning and agrees best with the parallel expressions. The last word in Hebrew means originally *dancing* (1 Sam. xxx. 16), but with special reference to its ceremonial use, as an expression of religious joy (2 Sam. vi. 14 )

6 (5.) *Why art thou cast down, (oh) my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Wait thou for God, for I shall yet thank him (for) the salvations of his face (or presence.)* The Psalmist's faith addresses his unbelieving fear, as if it were another person. The question involves a reproof, as if he had said, thou hast no reason to be thus dejected. *Why*, literally *what*, i. e. for what cause, or on what account. *Art thou*, literally, *wilt thou be?* Why wilt thou persevere in this extreme and gratuitous dejection? The form of the Hebrew verb is reflexive, *why wilt thou deject thyself*, implying, still more strongly than before, that the dejection was a voluntary one, and therefore culpable. *Disquieted*, the same verb that is used in Ps. xxxix. 7 (6,) and the root of the noun meaning *noise* or *multitude* in v. 5 (4) above. Here as elsewhere, it denotes, not mere uneasiness, but violent agitation, and is sometimes applied to the commotion of the sea. See below, on Ps. xlvi. 4 (3), and compare Jer. v. 22. *Within me*, literally, *upon me*, as in the foregoing verse. *Wait for God*, i. e. for the fulfilment of his promises, implying confidence and hope. The verb translated *thank* means strictly to *acknowledge*, and is applied both to the confession of sin and to the thankful acknowledgment of benefits received. See above, on Ps. xxx. 5 (4.) xxxii. 5. *Salvations*, frequent or complete deliverance. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) *His face*, his propitious countenance or aspect, with allusion to the benediction in Num. vi. 25, 26. See above on Ps. iv. 7 (6.) xvi. 11. xvii. 15. xxxi. 17 (16.) The determination to thank God for his goodness implies a confident expectation that it will be exercised. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.)

7 (6.) *My God, upon me is my soul cast down. Therefore I will remember thee from the land of Jordan and the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.* In spite of his expostulations, his dejection still continues, and can only be removed or

mitigated by a more direct recollection of what God is, and has done for him, and of the mutual relation still subsisting between them. *Upon me*, as in the two preceding verses. Here perhaps the phrase may be intended to suggest, that reliance on himself only deepened his dejection, and compelled him to repose his trust on some other and more sure foundation. *Is cast down*, will be so, unless and until thou lift it up. *From the land* implies that he was there excluded from God's presence by exclusion from his sanctuary. The indefinite expression, *land of Jordan*, i. e. the tract through which it flows, as we say the valley of the Mississippi, is referred specifically to the eastern side by the mention of the *Hermans*, i. e. as some suppose, Mount Hermon and the other mountains upon that side of the river, just as *Baalim* means Baal and other idols worshipped with him (1 Kings xviii. 18), or more probably Mount Hermon, considered not as a single eminence but a chain or range, like the Alps, the Alleghanies, &c. In either case it is put for the whole region east of Jordan, which did not properly belong to Canaan or the Holy Land. (See Josh. xxii. 11.) In this wide sense the expression might be used by David, even in reference to his abode at Mahanaim, north of the Jabbok, on the borders of Gad and Manasseh. (2 Sam. xvii. 24, 27. 1 Kings ii. 8.) *Mizar*, little or littleness. Whether this be taken as a proper name, of which there is no trace elsewhere, or as a descriptive epithet, it seems to be contemptuous.

8 (7.) *Deep unto deep (is) calling at the voice of thy water-spouts; all thy billows and thy waves over me have passed.* The first word in Hebrew seems to denote strictly a great body of water, and in that sense is applied to the ocean—see above, on Ps. xxxvi. 7 (6)—and also to its waves. It may here mean either a wave or a flood. The participle (*calling*) represents the scene as actually passing. The idea may be simply, that they respond to one another's noise, or more emphatically

that each wave invites or summons another to succeed it. For a somewhat similar expression, see above, Ps. xix. 3 (2.) *Voice*, i. e. sound or noise. The Hebrew word is less restricted in its application than the English, so that it is not necessary even to assume a personification. The next word, in the only other place where it occurs (2 Sam. v. 8), has the literal meaning of a water-spout or gutter. It may here denote the continued streams of rain poured upon the earth. The sense of water-falls or cataracts, although supported by the ancient versions, has no foundation in etymology or usage. The idea that David here alludes to the water-falls of Lebanon by which he was surrounded, rests on a false interpretation of v. 7 (6), which, as we have seen, contains a general description of the country east of Jordan, called in later times Perea. *Billows and waves*, literally *breakers and rollers*, i. e. masses of water rolling towards the shore and broken on it. Throughout this verse there is an obvious allusion to the universal deluge, as there is in Ps. xxix. 11 (10.) xxxii. 6, and often elsewhere.

9 (8.) *By day will Jehovah command his mercy, and by night his song with me, a prayer to the God of my life.* Notwithstanding his distresses he is still convinced that God has not forsaken him. By *day* and *night* some understand prosperity and adversity; but they are probably put together to denote all time, the opposition between song and prayer being merely rhythmical, i. e. occasioned by the parallelism. Compare Ps. xcii. 3 (2.) *Command his mercy*, i. e. exercise it authoritatively, or as a sovereign. *His song*, a song of praise to him, implying the experience of his goodness, even in a season of distress. Compare Job xxxv. 10. These words may be governed by the verb of the first clause, *he will command his song (to be) with me*, he will give me occasion to sing his praise, or construed with the substantive verb understood, *his song (shall be) with me*. The *God of my life* may be ex



plained to mean *my God of life*, i. e. my living God. Compare *the hill of my holiness*—my hill of holiness—my holy hill, Ps. ii. 6. It is more natural, however, to understand by *the God of my life* the God to whom my life belongs, upon whom it depends, and who is bound to protect it. ‘A prayer to him who is by creation the author, and by covenant the preserver, of my life.’

10 (9.) *I will say to God, my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning in the oppression of the enemy?* This expostulation may be regarded as a part or a sample of the *prayer* which God enabled him to offer, even in the midst of his afflictions. The divine name here used is (יְהוָה) the one significant of strength. *My rock*, my refuge, my protector. and the foundation of my hope. See above, on Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) *Why go I?* more exactly, why shall or must I go? *Mourning*, literally, squalid, dirty. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 14. xxxviii. 7 (6.) *In the oppression*, may either mean during its continuance, or in consequence of it, or rather both ideas are included.

11 (10.) *With murder in my bones, my enemies have taunted me, in their saying to me all the day, where is thy God?* The strong expression in the first clause is intended to denote excruciating pain. *My enemies*, oppressors, or persecutors, as the Hebrew word denotes. *Taunted me*, a stronger expression than *reproached* or *reviled me*, implying scorn as well as anger and hatred. *In their saying*, i. e. by their saying and while they say, as in the foregoing verse. *All the day*, continually. See above, on v. 9 (8.) *Where is thy God?* See above, on v. 4 (3.)

12 (11.) *Why art thou cast down, (oh) my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I*

*shall yet thank him (as) the help of my countenance and my God.* As usual in such cases, there is a slight variation in the burden or *refrain* from that in v. 6 (5.) See above, on Ps xxiv. 7—10. Instead of the *salvations of his face* we have here the *salvations of my face*. The attempt to assimilate the two expressions, by an emendation of the text, is not only destitute of all authority and evidence, but forbidden by the general practice of the sacred writers in repeating the expressions either of themselves or others. *The salvations of my face* is a bold and unusual expression which appears to mean such deliverances or such abundant help as clears up and illuminates the countenance before clouded and dejected. *And my God* is not an unmeaning or gratuitous addition, but has reference to the taunting question in the preceding verse, *where is thy God?* As if he had said, ‘Behold him, he is here. My God is He who dissipates my clouds and animates my hopes, and raises me superior to the sneers as well as to the fury of my enemies.’ While this variation relieves the repetition from entire sameness, the repetition itself brings the second strophe and the whole psalm to a striking and symmetrical conclusion.

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## PSALM XLIII.

A SUFFERER prays to be delivered from unjust and treacherous enemies, vs. 1—3, expresses a confident assurance that his request will be granted, v. 4, and upbraids himself for his despondency and unbelief, v. 5.

As the last verse is identical with that of the preceding psalm, and the last clause of v. 2 nearly so with that of Ps. xlii

10 (9), some have inferred that this is really the third stanza or strophe of that psalm, separated from it by mistake. But the difficulty of accounting for such a mistake, a difficulty aggravated by the resemblance of the compositions, together with a very perceptible difference in the general tone of the two psalms, makes it far more probable that it is a supplementary psalm, composed by the same person, or in imitation of him, on a different occasion. The union of the two in more than thirty Hebrew manuscripts, only shows that their transcribers drew the same hasty conclusion that has since been drawn by many interpreters, and is much more easily explained than the division of the psalms in all the other copies, on the contrary hypothesis. Their juxtaposition in the Psalter is owing not merely to their mutual resemblance, but to the fact that one was actually written as an appendix or continuation of the other. The same hypothesis sufficiently accounts for the absence of a title or inscription in the psalm before us.

1. *Judge me (oh) God*, i. e. do me justice, vindicate my innocence, exercise thy righteousness in my behalf. See above, on Ps. x. 18. xxvi. 1. *And plead my cause*, literally, *strive my strife*, but with particular allusion to litigious or forensic contest. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 1. *Against an ungodly nation*, literally, *from one*; the idea of deliverance, as the necessary consequence of God's being his advocate, is here implied, and afterward expressed. The word *nations* (גוֹיִם) being constantly applied to the gentiles or heathen, the use of the singular in reference to Israel always conveys an idea of reproach. Compare Isai. i. 4. *Ungodly*, more exactly, *not merciful*, the Hebrew word denoting both the object and the subject of benignant pity. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 28. *From a man of fraud*. See above, on Ps. v. 7 (6.) *And iniquity*, or more precisely, perverseness, moral obliquity. *Thou wilt*

*deliver me.* This is strictly an expression of strong confidence, but really includes the prayer, *deliver thou me.*

2. *For thou art the God of my strength.* The last word means properly *my place of strength*, my stronghold, or my fortress. See above, on Ps. xxvii. 1. *For what (cause) hast thou cast me off*, renounced, rejected me? The original expression is a very strong one, and implies disgust or loathing. Compare Rev. iii. 16. (*Why do I go*, or more exactly, *shall I, must I go*, i. e. go about, in different directions. The verb is an intensive form of that used in Ps. xlii. 10 (9), and occurs above, in Ps. xxxv. 14, in the same connexion as here. *Mourning*, with special reference to the neglect of neatness, both in dress and person, as a customary sign of grief. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 14. xxxviii. 7 (6.) xlii. 10 (9.) *In* (i. e. during and because of) *the oppression* (persecution) *of the enemy.* All this is indirectly represented as inconsistent with the covenant relation he sustains to God.

3. *Send*, i. e. send forth or out from thy presence. See above, on Ps. xiv. 7. xx. 3 (2.) *Thy light*, the light of thy countenance, thy favourable aspect, as in Ps. iv. 7 (6), or more generally, *light*, as the opposite of darkness, and a figure for relief from that of which darkness is the emblem, to wit, danger and distress. *And thy truth*, thy veracity, thy faithfulness, the certain fulfilment of thy promises. See above, on Ps. xxv. 5. xxvi. 3. xxx. 10 (9.) To send it out is to exercise this attribute, to manifest it in act, by performing his engagements. *They*, with emphasis on the pronoun, which is otherwise superfluous in Hebrew, they and no other, nothing else. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 4. *Shall guide* (conduct or lead) *me*, or giving the future an optative meaning, which is certainly implied in this connexion, *let them lead me.* *They shall cause me to come* (or *let them bring me*) *to thy hill of holiness* (*thy holy*

*hill*) and to thy dwellings, or thy tabernacles, as the Hebrew word is specially applied to the Mosaic sanctuary (Ex. xxv. 9. Num. i. 50.) This petition seems to imply a previous exclusion from it, and thereby shows that the historical occasion of the psalm, if not the same, was similar to that of the forty-second. The form of expression seems to be borrowed from Ex. xv. 13. The mention of the tabernacle and the holy hill, i. e. Mount Zion, shows that the psalm is neither earlier nor later than the times of David and Solomon, before whom there was no holy hill, and after whom there was no tabernacle. This strengthens the presumption that David was himself the author of both psalms.

4. *And I shall come*, as an expression of strong confidence that God will save him from his present troubles, or *I will come*, as the expression of a purpose, amounting to a vow or solemn promise. Both these ideas, though requiring a slight variation of expression in our idiom, would be necessarily suggested to a Hebrew reader by the original verb, the paragogic form of which, however, shows that the second is the primary idea. See above, on Ps. xlii. 5 (4.) *To the altar of God (Elohim)*, as the place of sacrifice, here put for the whole sanctuary. *To God (El) the gladness of my joy*, my joyous gladness, the author and the object of my highest exultation. *And I will thank thee*, praise thee for thy benefits, *with a harp* (כִּנּוֹר), the instrument on which David's history describes him as excelling. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 2, and compare 1 Sam. xvi. 16, 23. What he here vows is not mere private praise, but participation in the public praises of the sanctuary. *God, my God*. Not merely God in general, but my God in particular. Either expression by itself would have been insufficient to express the whole idea, *God* being too vague, *my God* too restricted, whereas the combination of the two implies

that his God was not a personal, domestic, or national divinity, but the supreme God.

5. *Why art thou cast down*, literally, *why wilt thou deject thyself*, implying self-rebuke for an unreasonable and untimely sadness. (*Oh*) *my soul*, which is really equivalent to *myself*. *And why art thou disquieted*, why wilt thou be agitated by these anxious doubts and groundless fears? See above, on Ps. xlii. 6 (5.) *Within me*, literally, *upon me*, as if his unbelieving fears weighed upon him as a heavy burden. *Hope thou in God*, or more exactly, *wait thou for him*, for his appearance, for his help, for the fulfilment of his promise. This, he is confident, will come at last. *For I shall yet praise him*, thank him, or acknowledge his kindness. (*As*) *the health of my countenance*, or more exactly, *the salvations of my face*, the salvations which are yet to cheer my clouded aspect and lift up my dejected countenance. The exact coincidence of this verse with the last of the preceding psalm, so far from proving it to be a part of it, rather proves the contrary, for reasons which have been already stated in the exposition of Ps. xlii. 12 (11.)

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## PSALM XLIV.

1. *To the Chief Musician. To the Sons of Korah. Maschil.* The same question here arises as in Ps. xlii, as to the sense in which the psalm is ascribed to the sons of Korah. For the reasons there assigned, it is, on the whole, most probable that David is the author, however difficult it may be to account for the omission of his name in the inscription, and the



appearance of the sons of Korah in the place which it usually occupies. See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. The addition of *Maschil*, i. e. a didactic psalm, is meant to show that though occasioned by a particular event, perhaps the same as in Ps. lx, it was composed and left on record for the permanent use and edification of God's people. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. The train of thought is marked with unusual distinctness. God was, in ancient times, the protector and deliverer of Israel, vs. 2—5 (1—4.) He is still their national and covenanted God, vs. 6—10 (5—9.) But he seems to have given them up to their enemies, vs. 11—18 (10—17.) Yet Israel still cleaves to him and suffers for his sake, vs. 19—23 (18—22.) He is therefore importuned to reappear for their deliverance, vs. 24—27 (23—26.) The state of things described and the sentiments expressed in this psalm, do not afford the slightest reason for referring it to any later period than that of David, when the same occasions of complaint and importunity were in existence, although not to so great an extent as afterwards.

2 (1.) *Oh God, with our ears have we heard, our fathers have recounted to us, the work thou didst work in their days, in the days of old.* What they had heard with their ears is tacitly contrasted with the very different things which they had seen with their eyes. See below, Ps. xlviii. 9 (8), and compare Judg. vi. 13. 2 Chron. xx. 7. Hab. iii. 2. *Our fathers have told us*, as enjoined or predicted in Ex. x. 2. The verb means properly to *count*, and then to *recount* or relate, with particular reference to the detailed enumeration of particulars. See above, on Ps. ii. 7. The last clause may be construed as a separate proposition. *A work thou didst work*, etc. But this leaves the active verbs of the first clause without a grammatical object. The emphatic combination of the verb and its derivative noun is greatly weakened in the English Bible, *what work thou didst*, and still more in the Prayer Book version, *what thou*

*hast done.* The particular work meant, as appears from what follows, is the conquest of Canaan and the settlement of Israel in it.

3 (2.) *Thou (with) thy hand didst nations dispossess and plant them, didst crush peoples and extend them.* This, though a literal translation, is obscure in English, because the pronoun *them* in both clauses refers to Israel. In the second clause it might indeed have reference to the Canaanites, and the verb be taken in the sense of sending out, expelling, as in Gen. iii. 23. 1 Kings ix. 7. Isai. 1. 1. But as it is also used to signify the sending out of shoots or branches by a tree or vine, Ps. lxxx. 12 (11.) Jer. xvii. 8. Ezek. xvii. 6, 7. xxxi. 5, the parallelism seems decisive in favour of that meaning here. The verb translated *dispossess* means properly to cause to inherit, but is sometimes applied to the substitution of one heir or possessor for another. See Ex. xxxiv. 24. Num. xxxii. 21. xxxiii. 52. Deut. iv. 38. The verb translated *crush* may simply mean to *injure*; but the stronger sense is here entitled to the preference.

4 (3.) *For not with their sword did they possess the land, and their (own) arm did not save them; for (it was) thy right hand, and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance; for thou didst favour them.* The *for* at the beginning introduces the proof or amplification of the general statement in the preceding verse, that it was God who planted and settled them. *Save them*, literally *to or for them*, i. e. did not bring deliverance to them, or work out deliverance for them. The translation of the second כִּי by *but* gives the sense but not the form of the original, as the use of the particle, in its strict sense, just before and after, forbids our taking the intermediate one in any other. With the first clause compare Josh. xxiv. 12; with the last clause Ps. iv. 7 (6.)

5 (4.) *Thou art He, my King, (oh) God! Command deliverances for Jacob.* The form of expression in the first clause is highly idiomatic and somewhat obscure. It may either mean, 'thou who hast done all this art still my king,' or 'thou art he who is my king,' which last may be thus resolved into the English idiom, 'it is thou who art my king.' Compare 2 Sam. vii. 28. 1 Chron. xxi. 17. The church here claims the same relation to Jehovah that was sustained by the former generations of his people. The last clause may also be translated, *order the salvations of Jacob*, i. e. cause them to take place and regulate them by thy providence. The personal name of the patriarch is poetically substituted for his official title as the father of the chosen people. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 6.

6 (5.) *In thee our adversaries will we push; in thy name will we trample our assailants.* The hopes of Israel still rely upon that power which expelled the Canaanites. The word translated *adversaries* properly means those who *press*, oppress, or persecute. See above, on Ps. iii. 2 (1), and compare Ps. xiii. 5 (4). xxvii. 2, 12. Our *assailants*, literally, our risers up, those rising up against us. See above, on Ps. xviii. 40 (39), and compare Deut. xxxiii. 11. The verb in the first clause means specifically to push with the horns, to toss, or gore. See Ex. xxi. 28—32, and compare Deut. xxxiii. 17. 1 Kings xxii. 11. *In thy name*, not merely by thy authority, or as thy representatives, but in thyself, in union and communion with thee. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) xviii. 30 (29.) The meaning of the future verbs in this connexion is, that they will triumph, if at all, in this way. They must prevail thus or be vanquished.

7 (6.) *For not in my bow will I trust, and my sword will (or can) not save me.* 'What was true of my fathers is equally true of me. As they did not prevail by their own strength, neither can I hope to prevail by mine.'

8 (7.) *In God have we praised all the day, and thy name unto eternity will we acknowledge. Selah.* The construction in the first clause, although foreign from our idiom, is more expressive than the simple phrase, *we have praised God*. It names God first, as the object *in* which the occasion and the theme of praise had been sought and found. 'It is in God that we find the subject of our praises.' The common version (*boasted*) confounds the verb here used with another derivative of the same root. *Thy name*, thy manifested nature. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) *To eternity* or perpetuity, forever. *All the day* (*long*), i. e. always. See above, on Ps. xxv. 5. xlii. 11 (10.) *Acknowledge*, i. e. gratefully, give thanks. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.)

9 (8.) *For thou hast saved us from our adversaries, and our haters (or those hating us) hast shamed.* The preterites in this verse are explanatory of the futures in the one before it. 'We will not rely upon ourselves hereafter, because it is thou who hast helped us heretofore.' This logical relation of the verses is destroyed by confounding the preterites and futures with each other, or explaining both as presents. *Shamed*, i. e. defeated, disappointed. See above, on Ps. vi. 11 (10.) xiv. 6.

10 (9.) *Nay, thou hast rejected and disgraced us, and thou wilt not go forth with our hosts.* The particle at the beginning (נא) implies something more than a negation of the favours just described. 'But now thou dost not so deal with us; *nay more*, thou hast rejected us.' This Hebrew verb implies disgust and abhorrence. See above, on Ps. xliii. 2. The other verb means to put to shame, to cover with disgrace, as in Ps. xxxv. 4. xl. 15 (14.) The past tense of the first verbs implies that the rejection was already manifest; the future following implies an apprehension that it would continue. *Go out with our hosts*, as a guide, a commander, and an ally. Compare 2 Sam. v. 24.

11 (10.) *Thou wilt make us turn back from the adversary, and (already) those hating us have plundered for them, i. e. for themselves.* Two of the most unwelcome incidents of warfare are here specified, flight and spoliation. *Spoiled for themselves*, not merely for their own advantage, but at their own will and discretion. Compare 1 Sam. xiv. 48. xxiii. 1.

12 (11.) *Thou wilt give us as sheep (for) food, and among the nations hast scattered us.* The consecution of the tenses is the same as in the preceding verse. *Sheep for food, or flocks of food*, i. e. intended and accustomed to be eaten. *Give* may either mean place, render, constitute, or give up, abandon. The last clause has by some been understood to refer to the Babylonish exile, and regarded as a proof of later date. But in every war with the surrounding countries, there were partial deportations and dispersions. See Joel iv. 2. Am. i. 6, 9, and compare 1 Kings viii. 46.

13 (12.) *Thou wilt sell thy people without gain, and hast not increased by their price.* They seemed to be gratuitously given up, i. e. without necessity or profit. *Without gain*, literally wealth or riches, as a product or equivalent. The same noun may be repeated in the next clause, *thou hast not increased (thy wealth)*, just as the verb *gain* is absolutely used in English. *Their price*, literally *their prices*, perhaps with reference to the individual captives, or to repeated sales of the kind here mentioned. Another possible but far less natural construction treats the preposition as a mere connective and reads, *thou hast not enhanced their price*, i. e. set a high price upon them, implying that he had, on the contrary, sold them for too little, or rather given them away for nothing. Compare Jer. xv. 13.

14 (13.) *Thou wilt make us a reproach to our neighbours, a scoff and a jest to those around us.* If this state of things

continues, such will be the necessary issue. *Make us, literally place us*, set us up, expose us. See above, on Ps. xxxix. 9 (8), and with the whole verse compare Ps. lxxix. 4. lxxxix. 42 (41.)

15 (14.) *Thou wilt make us a byword among the nations, a shaking of the head among the peoples.* A byword, literally a likeness or comparison, a case that may be cited as a memorable instance or example. The expression is borrowed from Deut. xxviii. 37. *A shaking of the head*, i. e. an object at which men will shake their heads, as an expression of contemptuous pity. See above, on Ps. xxii. 8 (7.)

16 (15.) *All the day my disgrace is before me, and shame my face has covered.* It is before me so that I cannot fail to see it or lose sight of it. See above, Ps. xxxviii. 18 (17.) Shame is here represented as a covering, as in Jer. iii. 25, but perhaps with special reference to the suffusion of the face with blushes, as in Ps. lxix. 8 (7.)

17 (16.) *From the voice of slanderer and reviler, from the face of enemy and avenger.* The preposition indicates the source or the occasion of the shame described in the preceding verse. *Face* may here mean either presence or the expression of the countenance. The last word is properly a participle and means *taking vengeance* or *avenging one's self*. Here, as in Ps. viii. 3 (2), it denotes a spiteful and revengeful enemy.

18 (17.) *All this has come upon us, and we have not forgotten thee, and have not been false to thy covenant.* With the first clause compare Judg. vi. 13. *Come upon us*: the construction is the same as in Ps. xxxv. 8. *We have not been false*, or *acted falsely*. The same verb with the same preposition, in Lev. xix. 11, has the sense of lying, or acting fraudulently, towards another. See also Ps. lxxxix. 34 (33.) What



is here professed is not entire exemption from all acts of infidelity, but freedom from the deadly sin of total oblivion and apostasy. In spite of his unfaithfulness, Israel still claimed to be and was the chosen people of Jehovah.

19 (18.) *Our heart has not turned back and our steps declined from thy path.* The force of the negative extends to both clauses, as in Ps. ix. 19 (18.) *Heart* and *steps* are put for inward affection and its fruit, external action. *Turned back* and *turned aside* are natural and common figures for moral delinquency. *Thy path*, the way of thy commandments.

20 (19.) *That thou hast crushed us in a place of dragons, and hast covered over us with deathshade.* The construction is continued from the preceding sentence. The connexion may be thus made plain in our idiom. 'We have been guilty of no such infidelity or total apostasy, that thou shouldest deal with us in this way.' *Crushed*, bruised, or broken in pieces. See above, on Ps. x. 10, and below on Ps. li. 10 (8.) *Dragons* may here be understood as meaning wild beasts or lonely animals in general. Whether the Hebrew word specifically signifies wild-cats, wolves, or jackals, is a question of little exegetical importance. The essential meaning of the whole phrase is a place inhabited by lonely creatures, i. e. a wilderness or desert. Compare Isai. xiii. 22. xxxiv. 13. xliii. 20. Jer. ix. 10 (11.) x. 22. xlix. 33. Ps. lxiii. 11 (10.) *Covered over*, i. e. covered up, completely covered, 'a stronger expression' than the simple verb. *Deathshade*, or the shadow of death, a strong poetical expression for the profoundest darkness. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 4.

21 (20.) *If we have forgotten the name of our God, and spread our hands to a strange God.* Some regard this as the common e'liptical formula of swearing. '(God do so to us and

more also) if we have forgotten,' which is equivalent to saying, 'we have not forgotten.' Another method of supplying the ellipsis is exemplified in Jos. xxii. 22. But since the verse, conditionally understood, yields a good sense in connexion with the next verse, this, as being the more obvious construction, is entitled to the preference. The act of holding up or stretching out the hands is often mentioned as a natural gesture of entreaty. See Ex. ix. 29, 33. 1 Kings viii. 38. Isai. i. 15. The word *God* in the version represents two different divine names in Hebrew, *Elohim* and *El*. See above, on Ps. xliii. 4. *A strange God*, or a *God (who is) a stranger*, i. e. to Jehovah and his people. The Hebrew word is applied by Moses both to men (Ex. xxx. 33) and idols (Deut. xxxii. 16.)

22 (21.) *Shall not God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.* This is the apodosis of the sentence begun in the preceding verse. 'If we have done thus, must not God know it?' The primary meaning of the verb translated *search out* is to *dig*, to bring to light what is hidden under ground. Thence, by a natural transition, it denotes the investigation and disclosure of all secrets. The interrogation is an indirect but strong affirmation of the fact in question. The *for*, at the beginning of the last clause, does not indicate the reason of the question, but of the affirmative answer which is tacitly implied. *He (is) knowing*, a form of expression which denotes continued and habitual knowledge. See above, on Ps. i. 6, and with the sentiment compare that of Ps. vii. 10 (9.)

23 (22.) *Because for thee have we been killed all the day, we have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter.* The causal particle at the beginning does not refer to what immediately precedes but to the remoter context, and adduces a proof of the assertion, that the church had not forgotten or forsaken God. This proof is afforded by the fact, that their very sufferings

were on his account. *For thee*, for thy sake, literally, *on thee*, *on (account of) thee*, on thy account. The preterite form, *we have been killed*, includes the present, *we are killed*, but with the additional idea, that the sufferings in question were not new or altogether recent, but had long been experienced. *Reckoned*, counted, estimated, i. e. by our enemies, who set no higher value on our lives than on those of *sheep for the slaughter*, literally, *a flock of slaughter*, i. e. one destined or accustomed to be slaughtered. This expression corresponds exactly to *sheep for food*, or *flock of food*, in v. 12 (11) above. The whole verse is a strong poetical description of severe persecution or distress arising from the spite of enemies, and as such is applied by Paul to the sufferings of the church of Christ, in which the ancient Israel continues to exist. See Rom. viii. 36.

24 (23.) *Arouse thee! Why wilt thou sleep, oh Lord. Awake, do not cast off forever.* This bold apostrophe implies strong faith as well as warm affection. Such an address would not be made to an inanimate object or an imaginary being. The idea is the same as in Ps. iii. 8 (7), to wit, that the withholding of God's help or of his sensible presence may be figuratively described as a state of inaction or of sleep, from which he awakes and arises when he once more manifests his presence and affords his aid. Compare Ps. cxxi. 4. Matt. viii. 25. The verse is therefore really nothing more than an importunate petition for divine assistance. *Cast off*, reject with loathing and contempt, the same strong expression that occurs in v. 10 (9) above. *Forever*, literally, *to perpetuity*. The Hebrew phrase is not the same, however, that occurs in v. 9 (8) above.

25 (24.) *Why wilt thou hide thy face, wilt thou forget our suffering and our persecution (or oppression)?* The same thing which had just been represented by the figure of sleep is here described as a refusal to see and to remember. Both figures

are employed in Ps. xiii. 2 (1) above, in reference to precisely the same subject. These anthropomorphisms, which would be unlawful in an uninspired writer, are perfectly intelligible and exceedingly expressive. The word translated *suffering* (or *affliction*) is generic and includes all forms of physical evil, one of which is then specified, to wit, the suffering caused by powerful and spiteful enemies. The same word denotes *oppression* or *persecution* at the hand of wicked men, in Ps. xlii. 10 (9.) xliii. 2. *Why wilt thou forget* is evidently more than *why dost thou forget*, for it conveys the additional idea, 'why wilt thou persist in doing as thou hast done heretofore and art doing now?'

26 (25.) *For bowed (or sunk) to the dust is our soul, fixed to the earth is our belly.* Both Hebrew verbs are active and literally mean, our soul has bowed down, our belly has adhered. *Belly* may either have the sense of *body*, as opposed to *soul*, as in Ps. xxxi. 10 (9) above, or be taken in its proper sense, in which case the whole clause is descriptive of the deepest degradation, a grovelling on the earth without the capacity or wish to rise, a state like that of the lowest reptiles, or the one denounced upon the serpent in Gen. iii. 14. Whatever the image here presented may be, it is evidently meant to represent a state of deep depression and debasement.

27 (26.) *Rise, a help for us, and redeem us for the sake of thy mercy!* This is the conclusion of his arguments and the sum of his petitions. *Arise*, from this state of apparent inaction, and exert thy power. Not merely *for our help*, as in Ps. xxxviii. 23 (22,) but *as our help*, thou who art thyself our help, its source, its author, a much stronger expression than *our helper*, though essentially synonymous. See above, Ps. xl. 18 (17), and below, Ps. lxxiii. 8 (7.) *Because of thy mercy*, as a ground

or reason; *according to thy mercy*, as a rule or measure; *for the sake of thy mercy*, i. e. for its honour, as a motive and an end to be accomplished.

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## P S A L M X L V.

THE intimate relation of the Messiah to the chosen people, and eventually to the other nations, is described in this psalm as the union of a mighty king with foreign princesses, among whom one is represented as the queen. This kind of allegory is a common one in scripture, but appears to have derived its peculiar form in this case from the court and household of Solomon. After a title, v. 1, the Psalmist announces his design to sing the praises of the King, v. 2 (1), whom he then describes as full of beauty, grace, and the divine blessing, v. 3 (2), as a conquering hero in the cause of truth and righteousness, vs. 4—6 (3—5), as a divine, perpetual, and righteous sovereign, v. 7 (6), and as such invested with peculiar honours and enjoyments, v. 8 (7), clothed in royal, festal, and nuptial garments, v. 9 (8), surrounded by kings' daughters with a queen at his right hand, v. 10 (9.) The Psalmist then addresses her directly in the language of congratulation and admonition, vs. 11—13 (10—12), and describes her apparel and her marriage procession, vs. 14—16 (13—15.) In conclusion, the king is again addressed, with the assurance of a numerous posterity, v. 17 (16), and endless fame, v. 18 (17.) The attempt to explain this as a mere epithalamium, in honour of Solomon, or Ahab, or some

later king, Jewish or Persian, has always been defeated by the difficulty of determining the subject, and the impossibility of accounting for the reception of such a poem into a collection of devotional songs, intended for the permanent use of the ancient church. The absence of any analogous example is admitted upon all hands. The allegorical or Messianic sense is given by the oldest interpreters, both Jewish and Christian. The allegorical idea of this psalm is carried out in the Song of Solomon, to which it bears the same relation as Ps. xxxvii. to the Book of Proverbs and Ps. xxxix. to the Book of Job.

2 (1.) *To the Chief Musician. Upon lilies. To the Sons of Korah. Maschil. A song of loved (ones.)* The unusual accumulation of descriptive titles in this verse suggests at once that the psalm is one of deep and solemn import, and thus raises a presumption against its being a mere epithalamium, or a secular poem of any kind. This presumption is confirmed by the inscription *to the Chief Musician*, implying that the psalm was designed for permanent and public use. See above, on Ps. iv. 1. This description, it is true, might be applied to all the psalms without exception; but it was particularly needed in the case of those which seem, at first sight, to be mere expressions of individual feeling, and still more in the case of those which, to a superficial reader, seem to be entirely secular in theme and spirit. The same thing is true, in substance, of the next term, *maschil, instruction*. The psalm before us is among the last which would have been selected by a modern critic as didactic in its character. But since it is so, this very fact affords a cogent reason for so designating it. This designation, at the same time, corroborates the previous presumption, that the psalm is allegorical, because an amatory nuptial song could not, in any sense, be called a *maschil*. The same thing is rendered still more certain by the ascription *to the Sons of Korah*, whether as authors or performers, since in either character their



function was a sacred one; they were not profane bards or minstrels, but Levitical precentors in the temple worship. See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. As this employment was continued in the family for many generations, there is no difficulty in assuming that the Sons of Korah here meant were contemporaries of Solomon, to whose regal and domestic habits the psalm contains so many obvious allusions. The other two expressions in the title are more dubious. *Upon lilies* is supposed by some to mean on instruments of that shape. See above, on Ps. viii. 1. Others suppose it to denote a mode of execution, or an air, or another composition upon which this was modelled. Others more plausibly maintain that this and all analogous inscriptions have respect to the subject or contents, and that *lilies* are a natural emblem of female beauty, the plural form implying a plurality of persons, such as we meet with in the psalm itself. See below, vs. 10, 11, 16 (9, 10, 15.) *A song of loves* would seem to mean either a *love-song*, or a *lovely song*. But the usage of the Hebrew word requires it to be taken in the concrete sense of *loved* or *beloved*, the plural feminine form serving to identify the persons thus described with the *lilies* of the other clause. These two phrases taken together represent the subject of the psalm to be lovely and beloved women, while the other three terms of the description, which have been explained already, show that the love and marriage here referred to are not natural but spiritual, to wit, the union of Messiah with his people, or of Christ with his church, an idea running through both testaments. Compare Isai. liv. 5. lxii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 1. Ezek. xvi and xxiii. Matt. ix. 15. xxii. 2. xxv. 1. John iii. 29. Rom. vii. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 25—32. Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2. xxii. 17. The allegory is more fully carried out in the first three chapters of Hosea, but in these and all the other passages referred to, the essential idea is borrowed from the Law, in which the national unfaithfulness to Jehovah is constantly described as a spiritual adultery, implying a conjugal relation between him and his

people. See Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16. Lev. xvii. 7. xx. 5, 6. Num. xiv 33. On the whole, then, this psalm appears to be a description of Messiah in his conjugal relation both to Israel and other nations, composed either by or for the sons of Korah in the reign of Solomon, from which the imagery seems to be borrowed, and designed for the permanent instruction of the church by being used as a vehicle of pious feeling in her public worship.

2 (1.) *My heart has overflowed—a good word (am) I saying—my works for the king—my tongue the pen of a rapid writer.* The whole verse is a strong metaphorical description of the way in which his thoughts were engrossed, and his words suggested, by one great theme. The first word properly denotes ebullition, the agitation and effervescence of a boiling liquid, or the similar phenomena presented by the bubbling up of water in a fountain. It is here used to express the spontaneous gush of feeling, thought, and word, in the inspired writer. This first clause may also be connected with the next, as indicated by the accents. *My heart is overflowing (with) a good word (or goodly speech)*, i. e. the subject upon which he is about to speak. The next words may then be rendered, *I am saying*, (or *I say*), *my works to the king*, i. e. they belong to him, or as an exclamation, ‘let them be his!’ *My works*, all that I do, including the praise here offered. The king meant is the ideal and expected king of Israel, the Messiah. The last clause may also be an exclamation. *(Be) my tongue the pen of a rapid writer!* i. e. let it skillfully and promptly give expression to my thoughts and feelings. It is probably in allusion to this passage that Ezra is described as a *ready scribe or rapid writer* (Ezra vii. 6.) Although particular expressions in this verse may be obscure, its general import is entirely unambiguous, as an animated declaration of the writer’s purpose, and a preface to his praise of the Messiah.

3 (2.) *Beautiful, beautiful, art thou above the sons of man; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee to eternity.* The first word in Hebrew is a reduplicated form, expressing the idea with intensity and emphasis. He is not praised as the fairest or most beautiful of men, but as fair or beautiful beyond all human standard or comparison. This general ascription of all loveliness is followed by the specification of a single charm, that of delightful captivating speech. *Grace*, in Hebrew as in English, denotes both a cause and an effect; in this case, grace or beauty of expression, produced by the divine grace or favour, and reciprocally tending to increase it. On any hypothesis, except the Messianic one, this verse is unintelligible. If the first clause were intended to describe a mere corporeal beauty, how could this be followed up by commending the grace of the lips, or either be recognized as the ground of an eternal blessing? It is only by supposing that the person here meant is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely, that the beauty predicated of him includes every moral and spiritual attraction, and that the grace of his lips has reference to his prophetic character and office, that the sentence can be made to seem coherent, and the promise at its close appropriate. The type, in this allegorical description, may have been furnished by him, of whom the queen of Sheba said (1 Kings x. 8), "Happy thy men, happy these thy servants who stand before thee always, who hear thy wisdom." But the glorious antitype was He, to whom "all bare witness, and wondered at the words of GRACE proceeding out of his mouth." (Luke iv. 22.)

4 (3.) *Gird thy sword on thy thigh, Mighty (One), thy honour and thy majesty.* Arm thyself for battle and for conquest. Compare 1 Sam. xxv. 13. As the act of girding is applied both to weapons and to clothing, the mention of the one here suggests the other. 'Arm thyself with strength and

clothe thyself with majesty.' The two words at the end of the sentence are constantly employed to denote the divine majesty (Ps. xcvi. 6. civ. 1. cxi. 3), as distinguished from that of mortals (Job xl. 10), or as bestowed upon them by a special divine favour (Ps. xxi. 6.) The first of the two is separately used to signify specifically royal dignity (1 Chron. xxix. 25. Dan. xi. 21.) The use of these expressions, together with the epithet of **Mighty** or **Hero**, which is one of the characteristic titles of Messiah in prophecy (Isai. ix. 6), confirms the previous conclusion that he is here the object of address. As to the sword, see Rev. i. 16. ii. 12. xx. 15, 21; and with the whole verse compare Ps. cx. 5—7.

5 (4.) *And (in) thy majesty, pass on, ride forth, for the sake of truth and humble right; and thy right hand shall guide thee (to) terrible deeds.* The first words may also be explained, without supplying *in*, as an emphatic repetition of what goes before. *And thy majesty (I say.)* The first verb may be rendered *prosper*, as in Isai. liii. 10; but it seems best to retain its primary sense, which is to pass by or over, to advance, or as we say familiarly, to go ahead. By *riding* we may understand the act of riding in a chariot of war, which was customary with the ancient kings. See the same verb so used in 2 Kings ix. 16, and compare 1 Kings xxii. 34, 35. *For the sake*, literally *on the word*, which may possibly denote that on which the conqueror rides, to wit, the *word of truth*. But this figure would not be very intelligible, and in almost every other case where the Hebrew phrase occurs, it is evident that *word* is used precisely as the English words *account* and *sake* are in the familiar combinations, *on account of*, *for the sake of*. See above, on Ps. xviii. 1. Thus understood, it here points out the object of Messiah's conquests, to wit, the vindication of *truth*, i. e. veracity, as opposed to fraud, and *humble right*, as opposed to proud iniquity. In this last phrase both the Hebrew words are

nouns, but rather in apposition than regimen, so that the literal translation would be *humility-righteousness*, right asserted in humility against a wrong maintained by pride and selfishness. *Thy right hand*, as the seat of martial strength, and the organ of aggressive action. *Shall guide*, or point the way, the proper meaning of the Hebrew verb, which, like other verbs expressing or implying motion, may be followed directly by a noun, where our idiom would require an intervening preposition. *Terrible (things), fearful (deeds)*, literally *dreaded*; but the Hebrew passive participle frequently includes the idea of a future passive participle in Latin. The insensible transition from the imperative to the future shows that the former was really prophetic, and that the prayer of this and the preceding verse is only a disguised prediction of Messiah's triumphs, as one going forth conquering and to conquer.

6 (5.) *Thine arrows are sharp—nations under thee shall fall—in the heart of the king's enemies.* The word translated *sharp* is properly a participle meaning *sharpened*, like *acutus* from *acuo*, and may here have the same sense as in Isai. v. 28, *whose arrows are sharpened and all his bows bent*, i. e. all his weapons of war ready for immediate use. *Nations*, not merely individuals, nor even armies, but whole nations, a description peculiarly, though not exclusively, appropriate to a superhuman conqueror. In order to remove the apparent incoherence of the second and third members of the sentence, some give *heart* the local sense of *midst*. 'Nations shall fall under thee in the midst of the king's enemies.' But this explanation of *heart* is not justified by usage, and the *king's enemies* are evidently the *nations* themselves. Others make the second clause a vocative—*thou under whom the nations fall*—or a mere parenthesis, with a verb supplied after it—*thy sharp arrows (nations fall under thee) shall penetrate into the heart of the king's enemies.* But these are forced if not ungrammatical

constructions, and by far the simplest solution is to repeat the first clause before the third—*thine arrows are sharp—nations fall under thee—(thine arrows are sharp) in the heart of the king's enemies.* This is the more natural as the falling of the nations is supposed to be produced by the arrows. 'Thine arrows are sharpened, and ready for the conquest of the nations; yes, thine arrows are already sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.' This last expression does not refer to a different person from the one addressed, but is merely a more emphatic way of saying, 'thine enemies, oh king!'

7 (6.) *Thy throne, (oh) God, (is) for ever and ever; a sceptre of rectitude (is) the sceptre of thy kingdom.* To avoid the obvious ascription of divinity contained in the first clause, two very forced constructions have been proposed. 1. Thy throne (is the throne of) God forever and ever. 2. Thy God-throne (or divine throne) is forever. But even admitting, what is very doubtful, that a few examples of this syntax occur elsewhere, the sense thus obtained is unsatisfactory and obscure, and this is still more true of that afforded by the only obvious or natural construction besides the one first given, namely, *thy throne is God forever and ever.* The explanation of *God* as a vocative is not only the most obvious, and sustained by the analogy of Ps. xliii. 1. xlv. 5 (4.) xlviii. 10, 11 (9, 10), etc., but is found in all the ancient versions and adopted in the New Testament (Heb. i. 8,) and was admitted even by the anti-messianic interpreters, until they were obliged to abandon the position that *Elohim* might be taken in a lower sense. *Forever and ever*, literally, *eternity and perpetuity.* See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) ix. 6 (5.) The same perpetuity is asserted of Jehovah's reign in Ps. x. 16. It is also promised to the royal line of David, ending and eternized in Messiah. See the original promise in 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16, and its varied repetition in Ps. xxi. 5 (4.) xviii. 51 (50.) lxxii. 5. lxxxix. 5, 37, 38 (4, 36, 37.)



cx. 4. cxxxii. 12 (11.) Isai. ix. 6 (7.) *A sceptre*, properly a staff or rod, particularly as a badge of office and especially of royal dignity. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 4. *Rectitude*, in a moral or figurative sense, derived from the physical and proper one of *straightness*, whether linear or superficial. See below, Ps. ixvii. 5 (4), and compare Isai. xi. 4. *Kingdom*, or as an abstract, *royalty*, in which sense it may qualify the noun before it, so that the whole phrase will express the idea *royal sceptre*.

8 (7.) *Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness ; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee (with) oil of joy above thy fellows.* The moral excellency of the person here addressed is represented as the meritorious ground of the divine favours by which he was distinguished. In an epithalamium, or an amatory poem, this would be ridiculous. The past tenses represent the moral qualities ascribed to him as already manifested and familiar. The substitution of the present greatly weakens the expression. Here, as in the verse preceding, *God* may be a vocative. *Thy God, oh God, hath anointed thee, etc.* Compare Ps. xliii. 4. li. 16 (14.) But the more obvious construction above given is favoured by the collocation of the words and the analogy of Ps. l. 7. *Oil of joy* (or *gladness*) is a figure borrowed from the ancient oriental usage of anointing the head on festive occasions. See above, on Ps. xxiii. 5. The expression is copied in Isai. lxi. 3. *Above thy fellows*, more than thy companions, i. e. other men, or more specifically, other kings. Compare what is said of Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 12, 13. 2 Chr. i. 12.

9 (8.) *Myrrh and aloes (and) cassia (are) all thy garments, from palaces of ivory, from (thence) have they gladdened thee.* The figure of unction in the close of the preceding verse suggests the idea of perfumes and aromatic substances, several of which are specified, as samples of the whole class, which makes

it comparatively unimportant, though by no means difficult, to identify the species. His dress is described as so impregnated with these odours, that it may be poetically said to be composed of them. By another natural association, these perfumed garments, which were not usually worn, suggest the idea of some rare festivity, and especially of that which is most joyous in all countries. It is from marriage-feasts in splendid palaces that these sweet odours and these joyful feelings have been brought away. Why more than one such celebration is referred to, will appear below. *Palaces of ivory*, i. e. adorned with it, like that of Ahab in 1 King xxii. 39, and that of Menelaus in the Odyssey. That this kind of luxury was not unknown in real life, may also be inferred from Amos iii. 15. vi. 4 Song of Sol. vii. 5 (4). The next word (מִנִּיר) is by some explained as a contraction of (מִנְיָרִים) a word meaning strings, and then stringed instruments (Ps. cl. 4.) *From palaces of ivory stringed instruments have gladdened thee.* But as this breaks the connexion between verses 8 and 10 (7 and 9), others make מִנִּיר the poetical form of the preposition מִן, as it is in Ps. xlv. 11, 19 (10, 18.) lxviii. 32 (31.) See also Judg. v. 14 and Isai. xlvi. 3. The repetition of the particle without the noun is similar to that in Isai. lix. 18, *according to their deeds, according to (them) will he repay.* So here, *from palaces of ivory, from (them or thence) have they gladdened thee.* The plural verb may be construed indefinitely, as tantamount to saying, *thou hast been gladdened*, or referred to a more definite subject namely, that presented in the next verse.

10 (9.) *Daughters of kings (are) among thy precious (ones); stationed is the queen at thy right hand, in gold of Ophir.* The idea of a marriage-feast, suggested in the foregoing verse, is here carried out by a description of the bride or brides. These are represented as being of the highest rank and splendid in appearance. *Precious*, dear, not in the sense of *beloved*

which the Hebrew word never has, but in that of *costly*, valuable, which it always has. *Stationed*, not simply *stands*, but *placed* there, as the post of honour. Compare 1 Kings ii. 19. The word translated *queen* means properly a *spouse* or *consort*, but is specially applied to the wives of kings, particularly those of Babylonia (Dan. v. 2) and Persia (Neh. ii. 6.) It is here used as a poetical expression which is also the case with the word translated *gold*, and derived from a verb meaning to *conceal*; it may therefore denote *ore*, as hidden in the mine, or hoarded treasure. Here and in Isai. xiii. 12 it is combined with Ophir, one of the places to which Solomon's ships traded with the Phenicians (1 Kings ix. 28. x. 11. 2 Chr. viii. 18. ix. 10.) Its situation is disputed and of no exegetical importance in the case before us. Whether it was in India, Arabia, or Africa, it is here mentioned only as an Eldorado, with the very name of which the idea of gold was associated in the mind of every Israelite, as it is in ours with the name of California. *In gold* means of course in garments decked with gold, or in golden jewels. The image here presented of a queen surrounded by inferior princesses was probably borrowed from the court of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 1), but employed to represent the chosen people as the bride of the Messiah, and as such pre-eminent among the nations. This kind of personification is not uncommon. See for example Isai. xlvii. 1. liv. 1. Jer. xlvi. 11.

11 (10.) *Hear, daughter, and see, and bend thine ear, and forget thy people and the house of thy father.* The Psalmist, in view of the ideal scene which he has brought before us, utters a kind of nuptial exhortation to the queen or chief bride of Messiah. *Hear* what I have to say; *see*, with the mind's eye, what I set before thee, look at it, consider it. *Incline thine ear*, lean forward as a sign of attention, so that nothing shall escape thee. See above, on Ps. xvii. 6. xxxi. 3 (2.) This preliminary summons to attend implies that something of

serious moment is to follow. The word *daughter* may be simply used, as *son* is elsewhere, to suggest the relation of a junior to a senior or of a pupil to a teacher. See above, on Ps. xxxiv. 12 (11), and compare Prov. i. 8. ii. 1. iii. 1. iv. 1, etc. Or the Psalmist may be understood as speaking in the person of the bride's father, when about to part with her; but this is less natural, since the father is referred to, in the last clause, as a third person. Some suppose a specific reference to the *daughter of Zion* as the real object of address, while others understand by *daughter* a king's daughter, a royal princess, or suppose her to be here addressed as one who was no longer to be treated as a daughter, but as a wife and mother. As if he had said, 'hitherto thou hast been a daughter, but now thou must forget thy father's house.' All these ideas may have been present to the writer's mind, as they are all spontaneously suggested to the reader's. *Forget thy people, etc.* is a strong but natural and perfectly intelligible mode of saying, form new relations, or accommodate thyself to them when formed. There is obvious allusion to the law of marriage in Gen. ii. 24, and to the calling of Abraham in Gen. xii. 1. What the patriarch was there required to do is here enjoined upon his children in the person of their ideal representative. The ancient church or chosen people is required to come out from the world and be exclusively devoted to Jehovah. The exhortation becomes still more pointed and significant when taken in connexion with the fact, that Solomon's wives, who seem to have supplied the figures for this striking allegorical tableau, instead of acting on the principle here laid down, by adopting the religion of their husband, "turned away his heart after other gods." (1 Kings xi. 4.)

12 (11.) *And let the king desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and (therefore) bow thyself to him.* 'The common version (*so shall the king desire, etc.*) is inconsistent with the form of the Hebrew verb, which is one used to express a command or

wish. The verse must be read in close connexion with the one before it. 'Forget thy father's house and be entirely devoted to thy husband, so that his affection may be fixed upon thee, without anything to hinder or impair it, such as a lingering desire for thy previous condition.' This is enjoined as a duty springing from the very nature of the conjugal relation, in which the husband is the head by divine right. Compare Gen. iii. 16. xviii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6. In recognition of this obligation, she is called upon to bow down or prostrate herself (1 Sam. xxv. 41. 1 Kings i. 16, 31), a gesture both of civil and religious homage, and therefore peculiarly appropriate here, where the ideal king and husband represents the real object of religious worship.

13 (12.) *And the daughter of Tyre with a gift thy face shall soften—the rich of the people.* In the Hebrew idiom *the daughter of Tyre*, or *the daughter* (i. e. *the virgin*) *Tyre*, denotes the city, or the population of the city, personified as a woman. See above, on Ps. ix. 15 (14.) It has been proposed indeed to take this as a vocative (*and oh daughter of Tyre, the rich of the people shall etc.*) addressed to Jezebel, in honour of whose marriage with Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 31) the psalm is then supposed to have been written. But besides the harsh construction of the first words, and the constant usage of the phrase and others like it in the sense explained above, it is inconceivable that a poem in celebration of the marriage between a wicked king of Israel and a heathen princess could have been composed by the Sons of Korah for permanent religious use in the kingdom of Judah. And yet this is the only hypothesis, except the Messianic one, on which the reference to Tyre can be explained. In the time of Solomon, the Tyrians were the most commercial nation in the world, and the one with which the Israelites had most commercial intercourse. It was natural therefore to use Tyre as a type for the wealth and

commerce of the world, and the same mode of representation is employed by later writers. (See especially Isai. xxiii. 18.) Thus understood, the promise that the daughter of Tyre should seek, by means of gifts, to conciliate the favour of the queen, is a prediction that the richest of the nations should seek union and communion with the chosen people. See below, Ps. xlvii. 10 (9.) lxxii. 10. lxxxvii. 4, in the last of which places Tyre is particularly mentioned. See also Isai. lx. 6. Hagg. ii. 7, 8 Zech. ix. 10. That the daughter of Tyre is here an ideal person, comprehending many individuals, is clear from the plural verb with which it is construed, and from the exegetical clause, *the rich* (i. e. the richest) *of the people*, whether this be understood to mean the richest of that people, or the richest of the nations. In either case, it is in apposition with *daughter of Tyre*, and in some way explanatory of it. 'The daughter of Tyre, that richest of the nations, (or the daughter of Tyre, even the richest of that nation), shall entreat thy favour.' This last idea is conveyed by a highly idiomatic phrase, meaning as some suppose to stroke or soothe the face, and then by a natural transition, to conciliate, to flatter. Others obtain nearly the same sense by making it mean to weaken, soften, or subdue the face, i. e. the opposition which the face expresses.

14 (13.) *All glorious (is) the king's daughter within; of gold embroidery (is) her vesture.* The second word in Hebrew may be either an adjective as in Ezek. xxiii. 41, or a substantive as in Judg. xviii. 21. *All* (i. e. *altogether*) *splendid*, or *all splendor*, i. e. containing nothing else, as the king's garments are said, in v. 9 (8) above, to be *all perfume*, and mankind in Ps. xxxix. 6 (5), to be *only all vanity*. The local adverb in the first clause means *within doors*, in the house (Lev. x. 18. 1 Kings vi. 18. 2 Kings vii. 11), and describes the bride as still awaiting her removal from her father's to her husband's house. *Gold embroidery*, or *net work of gold*. The common version



(*wrought gold*) conveys the false idea of a dress entirely metallic, whereas the Hebrew phrase denotes some kind of artificial texture or tissue, in which gold is interwoven.

15 (14.) *With (or on) variegated cloths shall she be conducted to the king; virgins behind her, her companions, brought unto thee.* The lively picture of an oriental wedding is now completed by a view of the procession to the bridegroom's house. The customary train of female friends is not forgotten, but with this peculiar feature added, that the bridesmaids are themselves described as brides, *being brought, (or made to come) to the king*, precisely as the queen was. This departure from the usages of real life, which would have been revolting in a mere epithalamium, is peculiarly appropriate to the design of the allegory, as it enables the writer to include in his description a striking figurative representation of the eventual accession of the Gentiles to the spiritual privileges and prerogatives which for ages were confined to Israel. The ancient church or peculiar people is the chief bride or queen of the Messiah, chosen from among the nations; but these very nations are *the virgins, her companions*, not her servants or attendants merely, who are brought to the king afterwards as she was brought before, to be united with him in an honourable marriage, not as the inferiors but the equals of his first and chosen consort. The noun at the beginning of the verse has been variously explained as meaning *needlework, embroidery, and variegated stuffs*; but the essential idea is sufficiently clear, to wit, that of rich and highly ornamented fabrics. As the dress of the bride has been twice described already, in vs 10, 14 (9, 13), some suppose that these words have allusion to the practice of spreading rich and costly cloths or carpets on the ground where royal personages walk. (Compare Matt. xxi. 8.) Others refer the clause to the embroidered coverings of the nuptial couch. The preposition here used is the one

denoting relation in the most indefinite manner, and may be translated *in*, *upon*, or *to*, according to these different hypotheses respectively. See above, on Ps. xxx. 2 (1.) xxxv. 19, 24. xxxviii. 17 (16.) *Conducted*, or escorted in procession, as the Hebrew word denotes, being applied both to nuptial and funeral pomps. Compare Job x. 19. xxi. 32. The king is first mentioned in the third person, and then in the second, by which insensible transition the way is prepared for the direct address with which the psalm concludes, although the third person is resumed for a moment in the next verse.

16 (15.) *They shall be conducted with rejoicings and mirth; they shall come into the palace of the king.* The first clause exhibits the procession, as it were, in motion, while the second brings it to its destination. As if he had said, 'I see the joyous train advancing, to the sound of merry music, towards the palace; and now they reach it, and are entered in.' This brings the description of the marriage to a close, and leaves nothing to be added but the joyful anticipations expressed in the concluding verses.

17 (16.) *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy sons; thou shalt set them for princes in all the earth.* In the translation, this might seem to be a renewed address to the bride, consoling her, in her separation from her father's family, by the hope of having one herself. The antithesis, however, is not between *parents* and *children* in general, but between *fathers* and *sons* in particular. Nor does the ambiguity of the translation exist in the original, at least in the masoretic text, where the pointing of the suffixed pronouns shows them to be masculine, so that the object of address must be the king himself, as it is in vs. 3—11 (2—10.) We have here another allusion to the marriage customs of the ancient orientals, among whom it was usual to wish the newly married pair a numerous and distinguished offspring. See Gen

xxiv. 60. Ruth iv. 11, 12. This wish is here replaced by a positive prediction, that the king's descendants shall be more illustrious than his progenitors. Such a comparison would have but little force, however, unless he were himself descended from a long line of royal ancestors, a sufficient proof that the king here glorified was neither Solomon nor Ahab. At the same time there is obvious allusion to the state of things under the reign of Solomon, who divided his kingdom into twelve viceroyalties (1 Kings iv. 7), and that of David, who made his own sons viceroys (2 Sam. viii. 18), a policy which seems to have been still pursued by Rehoboam (2 Chr. xi. 23.) What they did on a small scale, the Messiah is to do upon a large one. As they made their sons princes in Israel, so he shall make his to be rulers over the whole earth. Some indeed translate the last words *all the land*; but this is inconsistent with the conquests promised in vs. 5—7 (4—6), with the mention of Tyre in v. 14 (13), and with that of *nations* in v. 18 (17.) The *sons* of Messiah are his spiritual seed (Isai. liii. 10), to *set* whom *for princes* is to constitute or make them such, to give them places suited to their royal rank. The universal reign here predicted is also promised in Ps. ii. 8 above and Ps. lxxii. 11 below. Compare Zech. ix. 10.

18 (17.) *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall nations acknowledge thee for ever and ever.* The Psalmist speaks as one in the long series of inspired heralds, and in behalf of all. The form of the first verb implies fixed determination and involves a pledge. *Thy name*, as the expression of thy nature. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) xliv. 20 (21.) *In all generations*, literally, in every generation and generation. *For ever and ever*, literally, to eternity and perpetuity. See above, on Ps. xliv. 9, 24 (8, 23.) *Therefore*, not merely because I celebrate his name, but because his name itself is glorious. *Acknowledge thee* to be what thou art, in.

volving therefore the ideas of praise in general and thanksgiving in particular. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) xlv. 9 (8.)

## PSALM XLVI.

THE Church is safe under divine protection. This theme is amplified in three strophes, the close of which is indicated by the *selahs* in vs. 4 (3), 8 (7), 12 (11.) If the psalm owed its origin to any particular historical occasion, of which there seem to be some traces in the last part, there is none to which it would be more appropriate than the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian host in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings xix. 35. Isai. xxxvii. 36), as this was a signal instance of divine interposition for the deliverance of the chosen people, and peculiarly adapted to exalt the God of Israel among the nations.

1. *To the Chief Musician. To the Sons of Korah. Upon Alamoth. A song.* The Sons of Korah may here be mentioned either as the authors or performers of the psalm. (See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. xlv. 1.) In either case, we are perhaps to understand the Sons of Korah in the reign of Hezekiah. Some have ascribed the psalm to Isaiah; but of this there is no evidence. *Alamoth* means *virgins* or young women, and is here used as a technical expression of the Hebrew music, to denote soprano or treble voices. See above, on Ps. iv. 1. vi. 1.

2 (1.) *God (is) for us a refuge and strength; a help in distresses he has proved—exceedingly.* The first clause states the general theme or proposition of the psalm; the last asserts it to

have been established by experience. *A refuge*, a hiding-place, a place where men seek shelter and security from impending danger. The original expression is a local noun derived from a verb, the primary sense of which is to take refuge. (See above, on Ps. ii. 12. xvi. 1.) A different word is so translated in vs. 8, 12 (7, 11) below. In this connexion, *strength* may mean a stronghold or fortified place, which figure is expressly used in Ps. xviii. 3 (2.) xxvii. 1, and elsewhere. Or it may simply mean the source or author of strength, as in Ps. xxviii. 8 and elsewhere. *In distresses*: the plural form may involve reference to various occasions, or to complex and aggravated troubles in some one case. *He has proved*, literally *been found*, i. e. by us, in our experience. The common version (*a present help*) is scarcely justified by the occasional use of the original expression in the sense of being present or forthcoming. The last word, *very* or *exceedingly*, appears to have been added to qualify the whole clause or proposition, as one eminently and emphatically true.

3 (2.) *Therefore we will not fear in the changing of the earth, and in the moving of mountains in the heart of seas.* The simple idea expressed by these strong figures is, in the midst of the most violent changes and commotions. By the *changing* or *exchanging of the earth* (see above, on Ps. xv. 4), we may understand either its change of place, violent removal, or more probably a change of face and aspect or condition, as the effect of mighty revolutions. *In its changing*, i. e. when it changes and because it changes. See above, on Ps. xlii. 4 (3.) The mountains, as appears from v. 7 (6) below, are emblems of great kingdoms and powerful states. See above, on Ps. xxx. 8 (7), and compare Isai. xxxvii. 24. Rev. viii. 8. The sea may be mentioned only as the place to which the mountains are transplanted (Luke xvii. 6), or in which they are shaken; but it may also be a specific emblem of the world, continually moved and

agitated by the strife of human passions. See Isai. lvii. 20, and compare Isai. xxvii. 1. Dan. vii. 2, 3. This description is peculiarly appropriate to the commotions necessarily produced by the extensive conquests of the great empires of the ancient world, perhaps with special reference in this case to Assyria.

4 (3.) *Let its waters roar and foam, let mountains tremble in its swelling. Selah.* The singular pronoun refers to the sea, which is only poetically plural in the preceding verse. The verb translated *roar* occurs above in Ps. xxxix. 7 (6.) The one translated *foam* means strictly to ferment or effervesce. As the word rendered *swelling* is also used elsewhere in the figurative sense of *pride*, it is peculiarly appropriate to the commotions of the world, occasioned by the pride of man. The verbs in this verse may also be explained as proper futures. *Its waters shall* (indeed) *roar and foam, the hills shall tremble at its swelling*; but the people of God shall still be safe, as promised in the next verse. The *selah*, as usual, indicates a pause in the performance, and at the same time marks the close of the first stanza or strophe.

5 (4.) *(There is) a river—its streams shall gladden the city of God, the holy (place) of the dwellings of the Highest.* In contrast with the turbulent and threatening sea, he now presents a peaceful and abundant river. This emblem of God's favour, which is frequent in the scriptures, seems to have been borrowed by the later writers from the river of Eden, Gen. ii. 10. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 9 (8), and compare Ezek. xlvii. 1. Joel iv. (iii.) 18. Zech. xiv. 8. Rev. xxii. 1. *The city of God*, i. e. Jerusalem, his earthly residence, and the centre of the theocracy. See below, Ps. xlviii. 2, 3 (1, 2.) *The holy (place)* may either mean the same thing, or be a more specific designation of the temple. See below, Ps. lxxv. 5 (4), and compare Ex. xxix. 31. Lev. vi. 9, 19 (16, 26.) The place rendered holy by the pre



sence of God's earthly residence. *The Highest* or *Most High*, the divine name which denotes God's infinite superiority to other beings. See above, Ps. vii. 18 (17.) ix. 3 (2.) xxi. 8 (7.) The mention of *streams* in the plural indicates variety and fullness of divine favour.

6 (5.) *God (is) in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her at the turning of the morning.* This last idiomatic phrase seems to mean, at the point when the day turns to come back, after reaching its greatest distance. See Exod. xiv. 27. Judg. xix. 26, and compare Deut. xxiii. 12 (11.) The idea is that of a critical transition from grief to joy. See Ps. xxx. 6 (5.) xlix. 15 (14.) xc. 14. cx. 8. The terms of this verse become still more significant and striking, if we suppose a specific reference to the night in which Sennacherib's host was smitten, and the sight which was disclosed at break of day. See Isai. xxxvii. 36, and compare Isai. xvii. 14.

7 (6.) *Nations roared, kingdoms quaked; he has uttered his voice, the earth will melt.* There is here an allusion to the roaring, foaming sea of v. 4 (3.) *Uttered*, literally *gave* (a sound) *with his voice*, just as we may speak of giving a groan or a shriek. Compare Ps. lxviii. 34 (33.) Jer. xii. 8. This voice is not represented as assuaging the commotion, but increasing it, by making the very earth dissolve. As in many other instances, the psalmist takes his stand between the inception and the consummation of the event which he describes. Hence the transition from the past tense to the future. See above, on Ps. xviii. 7 (6.) With the last clause compare Ps. lxxv. 4 (3.) Am. ix. 6. God is represented as the ultimate author of these mighty changes. See Haggai. ii. 21, 22.

8 (7.) *Jehovah of Hosts (is) with us; a refuge for us (is) the God of Jacob. Selah.* Notwithstanding these commotions

and dangers, the divine protection makes us perfectly secure *Jehovah of Hosts*, the God of the Universe, and especially of heaven. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 10, and below, on Ps. xlviii. 9 (8.) *With us*. Compare the name *Immanuel*, Isai. viii. 8. *A refuge*, literally, a high place, a place beyond the reach of enemies and dangers. See above, on Ps. ix. 10 (9.) xlviii. 3 (2.) *God of Jacob*. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 6.

9 (8.) *Come, see the doings of Jehovah, who hath put desolations in the earth*. The first word properly means *go*, but is constantly used in summoning and inviting others. See above, Ps. xxxiv. 12 (11.) *The doings*, what he has been doing. The common version, *what desolations he hath made*, is not so natural as that above given, which takes the relative in its proper sense, and refers it to the nearest antecedent. *Put* (or *placed*) *desolations*, i. e. produced, occasioned, caused them to exist. *In the earth*, because the ruling power of the world was smitten; or *in the land*, i. e. the Holy Land, as the immediate scene of God's retributive judgments, which all men are invited now to witness. The use of the name *Jehovah* intimates that the God who thus controls the world is identical with the God of Israel.

10 (9.) *Silencing wars to the end of the earth; the bow he will break, and cut the spear, and the chariots will burn in the fire*. The participle, followed by the future, shows that the process is not finished, but still going on. *Silencing*, making to cease. *To the end*. The original expression is a stronger one and means *up to the end*, or *to the very end*. The bow, spear, and chariots, are named as necessary instruments of warfare. See above, on Ps. vii. 13 (12), and with the whole verse compare Isai. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3. Jos. xi. 9. Ez. xxxix. 9.

11 (10.) *Leave off, and know that I (am) God, I will be*

*exalted in the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.* These words are addressed to the discomfited foes of Jehovah and his people. ‘Cease from your vain attacks upon my people; learn from what you have already seen and felt that their protector is divine, and that he is resolved to be acknowledged as supreme, not only by his chosen people, but by all the nations and throughout the earth.’ This general recognition of Jehovah as the true and the supreme God, would of course be promoted by such a signal overthrow as that experienced by Sennacherib. Compare Isai. xxxvii. 20.

12 (11.) *Jehovah of Hosts (is) with us; a refuge for us (is) the God of Jacob. Selah.* This repetition of the burden or refrain in v. 8 (7), brings us back not only to the close of the second stanza, but to the beginning of the first, where the same idea is expressed in other words.

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## PSALM XLVII.

1. *To the Chief Musician. To the Sons of Korah. A Psalm.* A song of triumph, in celebration of a signal victory gained by the chosen people over certain confederated nations. In the first stanza, vs. 2—5 (1—4), Jehovah is celebrated as the conqueror of the nations; in the second, vs. 6—10 (5—9), as their rightful sovereign; in both, as the tutelary God of Israel. Another difference of form between the two parts seems to be, that in the first, the exhortation to praise God is addressed directly to the Gentiles; in the second, to Israel or the an

cient church. The psalm has every appearance of having been composed in reference to some particular event; but as this is not indicated in the psalm itself, it can only be conjectured. Of the various suppositions which have been suggested the most probable is, that it was written to commemorate the victory of Jehoshaphat over the Ammonites and Edomites, recorded in the twentieth chapter of Second Chronicles. Besides the general appropriateness of the composition to the juncture there described, it is, to say the least, a very singular coincidence, that the history records the presence, upon that occasion, not only of Levites in general, but of the Korhites (sons of Korah) in particular (2 Chr. xx. 19.) We read too that singers went before the army (v. 21), and that on the fourth day they assembled in a valley which they called *Berachah* (blessing), because there they blessed the Lord (v. 26.) There is also something in the simple, animated, flowing style of the psalm before us, which agrees very well with the supposition of its being an inspired impromptu, a psalm composed upon the spur of the occasion, either by some anonymous prophet who accompanied the army, or by the Sons of Korah themselves. See above, on P's. xlii. 1. This conjecture, as to the historical occasion of the psalm before us, is corroborated by the apparent relation of the next psalm to the same event. See below, on Ps. xlviii. 1.

2 (1.) *All nations, clap the hand! shout unto God with a voice of triumph!* The clapping of the hands is a natural gesture both of triumph and applause. See Nah. iii. 19, and compare Ps. xcvi. 8. Isai. lv. 12. The last word in the verse does not denote a feeling, but the audible expression of joy and exultation, by song or shout. See above, on Ps. v. 12 (11.) The nations addressed are not the particular nations which had just been conquered, but the whole gentile world, the nations collectively, who are summoned to rejoice in the proof just afforded, that Jehovah is their rightful sovereign. See above, on Ps.

xviii. 50 (49), and below, on Ps. lxvi. 4 (3.) cxvii. 1, and compare the original expression upon which this is modelled, Deut. xxxii. 43.

3 (2.) *For Jehovah, Most High, is terrible, a great king over all the earth.* He is not, as the heathen were disposed to imagine, a mere local deity, the God of the Hebrews only, but the God of the whole earth, the Universal Sovereign, and an object of fear to its inhabitants. See the same epithet applied to him in Ps. lxviii. 36 (35.)

4 (3.) *He will subdue nations under us, and peoples under our feet.* This is a proof both of his covenant relation to his people, and of his sovereign power over other nations. What he has done is but an earnest of what he will do. Compare Ps. xviii. 39 (38.) 48 (47.) This, though not a matter of rejoicing to the nations immediately concerned, may well be represented as a matter of rejoicing to the world at large, because it involves a promise that the Gentiles shall one day be included among the subjects of this divine protector and partakers of his favour

5 (4.) *He will choose for us our heritage, the pride of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.* By defeating the enemies who sought to expell Israel from the land of promise (2 Chr. xx. 11), God might be poetically said to settle them again therein, and, as at first, to choose their inheritance for them. *The pride of Jacob*, that of which he is proud, in which he glories, whether this be understood specifically of the Holy Land, or generically of all the privileges and distinctions which belonged to them as the peculiar people of Jehovah. *Pride*, exaltation, or distinction, as in Nah. ii. 3 (2.) Am. vi. 8. In Am. viii. 7, God himself is so described. *Jacob*, as in Ps. xxiv. 6. xlv. 8 (7,) 12 (11.) *Whom he loved.* See Mal. i. 2, and compare Ps. lxxviii. 68.

6 (5.) *God has gone up with shouting, Jehovah with sound of trumpet.* He is here described as returning to heaven after the conquest of his enemies and the rescue of his people, as in Ps. vii. 8 (7) he does the same, after sitting in judgment on the nations, and asserting the right of his own people. See Ps. lxviii. 19 (18), and compare Gen. xvii. 22. Judg. xiii. 20. The shouting and sound of the trumpet represent the ascension as a public and triumphant one. The ideal scene is typical of the actual ascension of our Saviour. See below, on Ps. lxviii. 19 (18.)

7 (6.) *Sing praises (to) God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises?* The Hebrew corresponding to *sing praises* is a single word (זָמַר), which means to praise musically, both with voice and instrument. See above, on Ps. ix. 3 (2.) God, who is first mentioned as the object of the praise, is then described as *our King*, the actual King of Israel and the rightful King of all the earth.

8 (7.) *For King of all the earth (is) God. Perform a maschil*, i. e. sing and play a didactic psalm. See above, on Ps. xxxii. 1. xlii. 1. xlv. 1. The *maschil* here meant is the psalm itself. The designation may have been omitted in the title for the very reason that it is contained in the body of the composition. The doctrine taught is that of Jehovah's universal sovereignty, and of the ultimate subjection of all nations to his peaceful sway. This idea is realized in the reign of the Messiah, so that the psalm is, in a wide sense, Messianic. The peculiar import of this last clause is lost in the common version (*sing ye praises with understanding*), which is also that of the Septuagint (ψάλατε συννετώς), the Vulgate (*psallite sapienter*), and Jerome (*canite erudite*.)

9 (8.) *God hath reigned over the nations, God hath sat down*



on his throne of holiness. He has begun to reign, has become a king, and as such has ascended the throne of universal empire. This and the next verse may be specially regarded as constituting the *maschil* mentioned in v. 8 (7.) *The throne of his holiness*, his holy throne, i. e. his divine throne, his throne unlike and above all others. See above, on Ps. xxii. 4 (3), and below, on Ps. ciii. 19, and compare Isai. vi. 1. lxvi. 1.

10 (9.) *Princes of nations are assembled—the people of the God of Abraham; for unto God belong the shields of the earth; he is greatly exalted.* The first word properly means *willing*, and especially spontaneous givers; then by a natural deduction, liberal, generous, noble, and as a substantive, nobles, princes. They are here named as the representatives of the nations, gathered in the presence of God, to do him homage and acknowledge his supremacy. The next phrase may mean either *as, with, or to the people of God*, most probably the first. *The God of Abraham*, their founder and progenitor, with whom the covenant was made, not only for himself but for his children. See the same phrase, Gen. xxxi. 42. Ex. iii. 6. Matt. xxii. 32. *The shields of the earth*, its protectors, here put for protection in the abstract, or for the *princes* mentioned in the foregoing clause. Compare Hos. iv. 18. It is not till all the principalities and powers of earth acknowledge their subjection to Jehovah, that he can be duly and sufficiently exalted. See above, on Ps. xxii. 29 (28.)

## PSALM XLVIII.

1. *A Psalm. A Song. To the Sons of Korah.* The generic term *psalm* (*mizmôr*) is rendered more specific by the addition of *song* (*shîr*), which commonly denotes a song of praise. See above, on Ps. xlii. 9 (8.) It is further described as (*belonging*) *to the Sons of Korah*, either as authors or performers. See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. The psalm before us celebrates Jehovah, and Jerusalem as his residence, vs. 2—4 (1—3), with particular reference to a recent deliverance from certain confederate kings, vs. 5—9 (4—8), which is recognised as a subject of perpetual praise vs. 10—15 (9—14.) The most probable conjecture, as to the historical occasion of the psalm, is that it has reference to the same event that is commemorated in the one before it. This is the more probable as we learn from 2 Chron. xx. 19, 27, that Jehoshaphat and his followers first praised God for their deliverance on or near the field of battle, and then again in the temple after their return to Jerusalem. The psalm before us was probably written for the latter purpose.

2 (1.) *Great (is) Jehovah, and to be praised exceedingly, in the city of our God, his holy mountain.* This verse propounds, as the theme of the whole psalm, the glory of Jehovah as revealed to his own people. *To be praised*: see above, on Ps. xviii. 4 (3.) The paronomasia, *great and greatly to be praised* is not in the original, where the words translated *great* and

*greatly* in the English Bible, are entirely different both in form and etymology. *The city of our God*: see above, on Ps. xlv. 5 (4.) The parallel expression, *the mountain of his holiness, his mountain of holiness, his holy mountain*, is intended to convey the same idea, Jerusalem in general and Zion in particular being here referred to as the seat of the theocracy, the place where God resided in the midst of his peculiar people, as their king and their tutelary deity, and where the duty of praising him was therefore peculiarly incumbent.

3 (2.) *Beautiful for elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Mount Zion, (on) the sides of the north, the city of the great king*. The common version, *situation*, although not erroneous, is too vague. The reference is to the lofty site of Jerusalem as seen from the surrounding country. It is called the joy of the whole earth, as a source of spiritual blessings to all nations. The *sides of the north* may mean the northern division of the city, and be joined with Zion, which was in the southern part, in order to express the whole. Or as the word here rendered *sides* always denotes the extreme edge or frontier, it may here be used to describe the appearance of the Holy City, as it rose upon the view of the army returning from the south. Either of these is a more natural interpretation than the modern one, which supposes an allusion to the heathen notion of a mountain in the extreme north, where the gods resided, to which belief there is supposed to be a reference in Isai. xiii. 14.

4 (3.) *God in her palaces is known for a refuge*. In this, his chosen seat, he has revealed himself already, as the protector of his people. See below, on Ps. lxxvi. 2 (1.)

5 (4.) *For lo, the kings met—they passed away together*. They had no sooner come together than they disappeared together. *Lo* or *behold*, as usual, indicates something unexpected

The definite expression, *the kings*, seems to refer to something recent and well-known. The kings originally meant were those of Moab and Edom. The word translated *met* means to come together by appointment or agreement, and here implies a combination against Judea. Compare Ps. lxxxiii. 4—6 (3—5.) *Passed away*, fled or disappeared.

6 (5.) (*As*) *they saw, so they wondered, were struck with terror, were put to flight.* This verse explains what was meant by their *passing* in the one before it. The *as*, corresponding to *so*, which is expressed in v. 9 (8), seems to be here omitted, as in Isai. lv. 9. *As soon as they saw* the Holy City, or the tokens of divine protection. The last two verbs are passives. For the meaning of the first, see above, on Ps. ii. 5, and for that of the second, on Ps. xxxi. 23 (22.) The whole verse is descriptive of a panic leading to a disorderly retreat or flight.

7 (6.) *Trembling seized them there, pain as of a travailing (woman.)* There, i. e. on the very spot of their anticipated triumph. See above, on Ps. xiv. 5. Or on the spot from which they first obtained a sight of Jerusalem. This may have been Tekoa (2 Chron. xx. 20), the lofty site of which commands an extensive prospect. See Robinson's Palestine, ii. 182. The comparison in the last clause is a common one in scripture, to denote intense but transient pain. Compare Isai. xlii. 8. xxi. 3 xlii. 14.

8 (7.) *With an east wind thou wilt break ships of Tarshish.* It is an interesting coincidence that such a disaster did befall the navy of Jehoshaphat himself. See 1 Kings xxii. 49 (48.) 2 Chr. xx. 36, 37. Some suppose this to be specifically meant in the case before us, while others understand it as a figurative description of God's sovereign control over all inferior agents. The east wind seems to be mentioned as the one most to be

dreaded in the neighbouring seas. The trade to Tarshish and Ophir was almost the only maritime commerce known to the contemporary Hebrews. See 2 Chron. ix. 21, and compare Isai. ii. 16. xxiii. 1, 14. lx. 9.

9 (8.) *As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of Jehovah of Hosts, in the city of our God. God will confirm it to eternity. Selah.* What they had heard of as occurring elsewhere or in ancient times, they had now witnessed for themselves. See above, on Ps. xlv. 2 (1), and compare Job xlii. 5. *Jehovah of Hosts*: see above, on Ps. xxiv. 10. *God will confirm it*, or *establish her*, i. e. Jerusalem, the city of our God. He will secure it against all such assaults as it has just escaped. As Jerusalem is here regarded not as a mere town, but as the seat of the theocracy, the earthly residence of God, the promise is still valid, in its strongest sense, with respect to the church, of which the ancient Zion was the constituted type and local centre.

10 (9.) *We have compared, oh God, thy mercy in the midst of thy temple.* The verb in this verse sometimes means to *meditate*, but scarcely ever, if at all, without some reference to its primary sense of likening or comparing. It may here denote the act of comparing what they saw with what they had previously heard, as in the foregoing verse. *In the midst* of (i. e. within) *thy temple*, literally *thy palace*, a term applied both to the tabernacle and the temple, as the royal residence of Jehovah. See above, on Ps. v. 8 (7.) xi. 4. xviii. 7 (6.) xxvii. 4. xxix. 9. This expression agrees well with the supposition, that this psalm was intended to be sung at the temple after the return of the army. See 2 Chr. xx. 27.

11 (10.) *As thy name, oh God, so is thy praise, to the ends of the earth; (of) righteousness full is thy right hand.* The

most obvious meaning of the first clause would seem to be that wherever God is known he is praised. Some however understand by *name* the previous manifestations of God's nature, and by *praise* the glory due to his most recent interposition in behalf of his people. The sense will then be still the same as in v. 9 (8), namely, that what the contemporary Israelites had heard of God's wonderful works in time past they had now seen and felt in their own experience. *To the ends of the earth*, literally, *on* or *over* them, which may be a poetical hyperbole describing the fame of these events as already gone beyond the boundaries of earth. See below, on v. 15 (14.) *Righteousness* that of God, as manifested in the destruction of his enemies and the rescue of his people. See above, on Ps. xxxv. 28. This is said to fill his right hand, i. e. to be abundantly displayed in the exercise of his almighty power. See above, on Ps. xvi. 11.

12 (11.) *Rejoice shall Mount Zion, exult shall the daughters of Judah, because of thy judgments.* According to a very ancient usage, which is found even in the prose of technical geography (Josh. xv. 45, 47), the *daughters of Judah* may be the minor towns dependent on Jerusalem. The more obvious sense is that of female inhabitants, who, as the weaker sex, had particular occasion to rejoice in the deliverance of the country from its barbarous invaders. The verbs may be understood as expressive of a wish or prayer (*let Mount Zion rejoice*, etc.) But the proper future sense agrees better with what immediately precedes, as the declaration of the glory, which has already redounded to the name of God from this exhibition of his power and faithfulness, is then followed up by a declaration, that the same effect shall be continued. *For the sake* (or *on account*) *of thy judgments*, these experimental proofs of thy righteousness, afforded by its actual exercise.



13 (12.) *Surround Zion and encircle her; count her towers.* The verbs in the first clause mean to *walk* (or *go*) *around*. They are twice used together in the history of the taking of Jericho (Josh. vi. 3, 11.) The second occurs above in Ps. xvii. 9. xxii. 17 (16.) The object of the walk here proposed is to survey the perfect state of her defences, as untouched by the recent dangers. Compare Isai. xxxiii. 20. *Count her towers*, to see if any of them have been demolished.

14 (13.) *Set your heart to her rampart, examine her palaces, that you may recount (it) to a generation following.* The meaning of the first phrase is, *apply your mind*, give attention, observe closely. The word translated *rampart* seems to denote the exterior circumvallation, here contrasted with the *palaces* which it surrounded. *Recount it*, i. e. the result of your inspection, or the sound state of the defences, both as a reminiscence of this particular deliverance, and as a type or emblem of the safety which the church enjoys under divine protection, and therefore entitled to perpetual remembrance. The last word in Hebrew is not a participle but an adjective, strictly meaning *later* or *latter*, subsequent or future.

15 (14.) *For this God (is) our God for ever and ever; he will guide us unto death.* The *for* assigns a reason for representing this event as one to be remembered, namely, because it is an instance of the favour of Jehovah, who is our perpetual defender. The whole may be thrown into a single sentence, without supplying *is* in the first clause. *For this God, our God, forever and ever, he will guide, &c.* Or still more in accordance with the usual construction of the pronoun (הוא), *this is our God for ever and ever*, i. e. he who has done this is and is to be our God. According to the other and more usual construction, *this God* means the God who has performed these wonders *For ever and ever*, literally, *eternity and perpetuity*

See above, on Ps. ix. 6 (5.) x. 16. xxi. 5 (4) xlv. 7 (6.) *Unto death*, or as some explain it, *at death*, i. e. he will save us from it; others, *over death*, beyond it. But the most obvious explanation, and the one most agreeable to usage, is that which makes the phrase mean even to the end of life, or as long as we live. The idea of a future state, though not expressed, is not excluded. See above, on Ps. xvii. 15.

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## PSALM XLIX.

1. *To the Chief Musician. To the Sons of Korah. A Psalm.* This psalm, like the thirty-seventh, is intended to console the righteous under the trials arising from the prosperity and enmity of wicked men, by showing these to be but temporary, and by the prospect of a speedy change in the relative position of the parties. It consists of a short introductory stanza, inviting general attention to the subject, vs. 2—5 (1—4), followed by two longer stanzas, the close of which is marked by the recurrence of a burden or *refrain* in vs. 13 (12) and 21 (20.) In the first of these two divisions, the prominent idea is the fallacy of all merely secular advantages and hopes, vs. 6—13 (5—12.) In the other, these advantages and hopes are directly contrasted with those of the believer, vs. 14—21 (13—20.) There is nothing in the psalm to determine its date or historical occasion. The inscription *to the Sons of Korah* is consistent with any date from the time of David to that of Ezra. See above, on Ps. xlii. 1. xlv. 1. xlv. 1. xvi. 1. xlvii. 1. xlviii. 1. In favour of an earlier date however may be urged the obscurity and difficulty of the style.

2 (1.) *Hear this, all the nations ; give ear, all inhabitants of the world !* This general invocation implies that the doctrine to be taught is one of universal interest. The form of expression is similar to that in Micah i. 2 and 1 Kings xxii. 28, and may be borrowed, in all these cases, from the still stronger one in Deut. xxxii. 1. See below, Ps. l. 1, and compare Isai. i. 2. The word translated *world* means primarily *duration* or continued existence ; then more specifically, human *life*, the present state of things ; and by a natural transition, the *world*, as the place where it is spent. See above, on Ps. xvii. 14. xxxix. 6 (5), and below, on Ps. lxxxix. 48 (47.)

3 (2.) *Both low and high together rich and poor.* This is the conclusion of the sentence begun in the preceding verse. The first clause is highly idiomatic in its form, and cannot be literally rendered into intelligible English. *Likewise sons of man, likewise sons of man.* The word *man* here corresponds to two distinct Hebrew words which, when placed in opposition, denote men of high and low degree. See above, on Ps. v. 3 (2), and below, on Ps. lxii. 10 (9), and compare Prov. viii. 4. The same antithesis is presented in a different form, Ps. xxii. 30 (29.) The rich are here summoned to receive reproof and warning, the poor consolation and encouragement.

4 (3.) *My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart (is) understanding.* This is no self-praise, as he is only to communicate what he has received. *Shall speak*, is speaking or about to speak. *Wisdom* and *understanding* are both plural in the Hebrew, that form denoting fullness or variety. See above, on Ps. xviii. 51 (50.) The plural of the first word is also applied to the personification of the highest wisdom, in Prov. ix. 1. The speech mentioned in the first clause is the outward expression of the thought or meditation in the second. See the same combination above, Ps. v. 2 (1.) xix. 15 (14.)

5 (4.) *I will incline to a parable my ear, and open with a harp my riddle.* I will hear what God says and impart it to others. *To incline* (or *bend*) *the ear* is to lean forward as a sign or gesture of attention. See above, on Ps. xvii. 6. xxxi. 3 (2.) xl. 2 (1.) *Parable*, literally likeness or comparison; then any figurative, tropical expression. See above, on Ps. xlv. 15 (14.) The parallel word here means an enigma, something hard to understand. *To open* it is not to begin it, but either to utter it or to explain it, probably the latter. What he hears from God he will open or expound to man. *With the harp* indicates the form in which his exposition is to be presented, namely, that of a lyrical composition, intended to be sung with an instrumental accompaniment. See above, on Ps. xxxiii. 2. xliii. 4.

6 (5.) *Why should I fear in days of evil, (when) the iniquity of my oppressors (or supplanters) shall surround me?* The theme of the whole psalm is the negative proposition involved in this interrogation, namely, that the righteous has no cause to fear, even when surrounded by powerful and spiteful enemies. *Days of evil*, i. e. of misfortune or distress. The word translated *oppressors* commonly means *heels*; but as this yields no good sense here, it may be taken as a verbal noun, meaning either *treaders*, trampers, oppressors, or supplanters, traitors, in a sense akin to which the verbal root is used, Gen. xxvii. 36. Hos. xii. 4 (3.) In either case, it is clearly a description of his enemies, as practising violence or fraud against him.

7 (6.) *Those relying on their strength, and in the abundance of their wealth they glory.* A further description of the oppressors and supplanters. The Hebrew word translated *strength* is applied, in different cases, to bodily, pecuniary, military, and moral strength. The parallelism here would seem to indicate a reference to the power which naturally

springs from great possessions. The word translated *abundance* may also mean *increase*. For the use of the verbal root, see above, on Ps. iii. 2 (1.) *Glory*, boast, or praise themselves, which last is the exact sense of the reflexive verb here used.

8 (7.) *A brother can not (or he shall not) even redeem; a man can not give to God his ransom.* In the first clause, *brother* may be either the subject or the object of the verb; the rich man cannot redeem his brother, or, his brother cannot redeem him. The former agrees better with the obvious design to show the worthlessness of mere wealth, which does not enable a man to redeem a brother, i. e. save another's life. The *even* in this version is intended to express the emphatic repetition of the verb in Hebrew. It cannot do that which is most essential, and without which other advantages are worthless. Unless the last clause be regarded as a mere reiteration of the same idea in other words, it must be understood to mean that as the rich man cannot redeem his brother from the inevitable stroke of death, much less can he redeem himself, or pay to God his own ransom. This construction of the last words is the less unnatural because there is properly no reflexive pronoun in the Hebrew language. See above, on Ps. xxxvi. 3 (2.)

9 (8.) *And costly is the ransom of their soul, and he (or it) ceases forever.* This obscure verse admits of several constructions. *Their soul* refers most probably to the rich man and his brother. The soul or life of both requires so much to ransom it, that neither can redeem the other. The verb in the last clause may mean *ceases to live*, perishes, and agree with either or with each of the subjects previously mentioned. The ransom of their life is so costly, that neither can be saved. Or the verb may agree with *ransom*, as in the English Bible; it is too costly to be paid, and therefore *ceases*, or remains unpaid, forever. The same sense substantially may be obtained by making

*cease* mean cease (or fail) to pay, and construing it with one of the preceding nouns. The ransom is so costly that he fails to pay it, or ceases to attempt it, forever. Upon any of these various suppositions, the essential idea is that the ransom of their life is too expensive to be paid.

10 (9.) *That he should still live forever and not see corruption.* The form of the first verb in Hebrew shows that this is a dependent sentence, to be immediately connected, as some think, with the ninth verse: 'he cannot even redeem a brother, a man cannot pay to God a ransom, so as to live forever and not see corruption.' The tenth verse is then a parenthetical amplification of the ninth. Others connect the ninth and tenth directly, by taking *cease* to mean that he cannot bring to pass. The redemption of their soul is too costly; he can never so contrive it, that he shall live forever and not see corruption.

11 (10.) *For he shall see (it); wise (men) must die; likewise the fool and brute must perish, and leave to others their substance.* The usual construction of the first words—*when he sees* (or *for he sees*) *that wise men die*—is neither so simple in itself, nor so well suited to the context, as that which gives the verb the same sense, and the same object, as in the preceding verse. Wealth cannot ransom its possessor, so that he shall live forever and not see corruption, *for he shall see it*, as all others do. Even the wisest men must die, much more the fool and brutish person. These are the terms so frequently used in the Book of Proverbs to describe the sinner as irrational. See above, on Ps. xiv. 1, and compare Prov. i. 32. x. 1. xii. 1. xxx. 2. Ecc. ii. 16. In the use of the verbs *die* and *perish*, there may be an intentional allusion to the different destiny of the wise and foolish. *Likewise*, or more literally, *together*, at the same time. See above, Ps. iv. 9 (8), and compare Isai



i. 28. *Substance*, strength, pecuniary strength, the same word that is used in v. 7 (6) above.

12 (11.) *Their inward thought* (is that) *their houses* (shall continue) *for ever, their dwellings to generation and generation: they call their lands by their own names.* This is substantially the common version, which is here retained because it yields a good sense, and is as probable as any other explanation of this very obscure verse. The first word in Hebrew strictly means the *inside* of anything, and especially of man, i. e. his mind or heart, particularly as distinguished from his words or outward conduct. See above, on Ps. v. 10 (9), and below, on Ps. lxiv. 7 (6.) The plural form at the end of the sentence occurs nowhere else, but corresponds to our word *grounds*, when applied to cultivated lands. As the singular, however, though it commonly means *ground*, seems occasionally to denote a *land* or *country*, some understand the clause to mean that *they* (i. e. men indefinitely) *proclaim* (or *celebrate*) *their names over lands*, i. e. throughout various countries. Another possible though not a probable construction makes the last two words mean *upon earth*, the form of the Hebrew noun being assimilated to that of the particle before it. Amidst these various constructions the essential meaning still remains unchanged, to wit, that the rich fools of the foregoing context imagine their prosperity to be perpetual.

13 (12.) *And man in honour shall not lodge; he is made like to the brutes; they are destroyed.* The *and* at the beginning is equivalent to *and yet*, or to the simple adversative *but*. It introduces the contrast of man's real frailty with his imaginary permanence. As if he had said, 'such are the dreams of the rich fool, and (yet) man really, etc.' The word translated *honour* properly means *value*, price, but is applied precisely like the corresponding Greek word (τιμή.) It here includes all

that makes the condition of the rich fool seem desirable, either to his own conceit, or to the envious admiration of his neighbours. In this position *he is not to lodge*, i. e. remain permanently, or with closer adherence to the strict sense of the verb, continue even for a night, implying that he is to perish before morning. This passage seems to have been present to our Lord's mind, when he uttered the parable of the Rich Fool. Compare especially with the verse before us, Luke xii. 20. *Made like*, assimilated, not in his origin, but in his end. The point of comparison seems to be their blindness and irrational destitution of all foresight. The word translated *brutes* may be still more closely rendered *beasts*, being properly descriptive of the larger quadrupeds. It might even seem in this case to denote specifically *cattle* or domesticated animals, as those which men are especially accustomed to see suddenly deprived of life. But this limitation of the term is peculiar to prose style, whereas in poetry, when used distinctively, it rather signifies *wild beasts*. It is better, therefore, to give it here its wider sense of beasts in general, and to explain even these as mere representatives or samples of the whole class, brutes or irrational animals, like whom the rich fool is cut off suddenly and unawares. *They are destroyed*, or as the word seems to signify originally, *silenced*, brought to silence, i. e. stilled or hushed in death. By assuming an enallage or sudden change of number, we may construe this verb with the human subject. *He* (the rich fool) *is treated like the brutes; (like these) they* (the rich fools) *are destroyed*. A less emphatic but more obvious construction is that which refers it to the brutes themselves. *He is made like to the beasts* (which) *are destroyed* (before they are aware.)

14 (13.) *This (is) their course; (such is) their folly; and (yet) after them (men) will delight in what they say. Selah.* Their *way* or course means not only their behaviour, but their

fate or destiny. See above, on Ps. i. 6. *Such is their folly*: literally *folly (is) to them*, they have folly, they are fools. The noun means originally *hope* or expectation; then an overweening confidence, a fond or foolish hope; then *folly*, but not without a special reference to this specific form of it. The term is peculiarly appropriate to those who had just been described as confidently looking for a permanent enjoyment of their present pleasures, when about to be deprived of them forever. *After them* may refer to those who follow them in time, their successors or descendants. But as a similar expression elsewhere denotes those who follow in the sense of imitating or adhering to a leader (Ex. xxiii. 2. 2 Samuel ii. 10), it is best to retain this meaning in the case before us. *They who follow them*, their imitators, their adherents, *will delight in their mouth*, approve of what they say, adopt their principles, and act upon their maxims. The general meaning of the verse, as thus explained, is that notwithstanding the gross folly of such sinners, as proved by the end to which it brings them, they will still find some to walk in their footsteps and to share their ruin. Against this propagated and perpetuated folly there is a tacit but emphatic protest in the meditative pause which follows, and in the *Selah* which denotes it.

15 (14.) *Like a flock to the grave they drive; death is their shepherd; and the righteous shall rule over them in the morning; and their form the grave (is) to consume; from (their) home to him (they go or they belong.)* This is one of the most obscure and difficult verses in the book, although its general meaning is obvious enough. *Like sheep*, or like a flock, i. e. blindly, in confusion, and without choice or foresight of their own. See above, on v. 13 (12.) *Hell*, in the wide old English sense of the grave or the state of the dead. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) ix. 18 (17.) xvi. 10. xviii. 6 (5.) xxx. 4 (3.) xxxi. 18 (17.) *They drive*: the Hebrew verb, like the English one

is active in form, but really involves a passive meaning, *they are driven*, literally *put* or *placed*. See above, on Ps. xii. 6 (5.) The figure of a flock is carried out by representing Death as the shepherd, by whom they are led or driven. The literal meaning of the words is, *Death shall feed them*, but the Hebrew verb means to feed as a shepherd; or rather to perform the whole office of a shepherd. To this word and its synonyme in Greek (*ποιμαίνω*) we have no exact equivalent in English. The bald translation, *death shall feed them*, seems to imply that the prominent idea is that of nourishment, whereas it is that of guidance or direction. The common version, *death shall feed on them*, although not ungrammatical, is entirely at variance with the figure of a flock and a shepherd, which immediately precedes. The verb translated *rule* seems originally to denote the act of treading on or trampling, in which sense it is supposed to be used by Joel iv. 13 (iii. 13.) If this sense be adopted here, the idea may be either that of treading on a grave, or on the neck of a conquered enemy. As the Hebrew verb, however, in every other case, means to *rule over*, and especially when followed by the same preposition as in this place, it is better to adhere to the established usage, which affords a perfectly good sense, namely, that the righteous shall soon triumph over their once prosperous oppressors. *At break of day*, or in the morning, i. e. very soon, to-morrow, with allusion, no doubt, to the form of expression in v. 13 (12) above, and to the general use of night and morning, as figures for distress and relief from it. See above, on Ps. xxx. 6 (5.) *Their form*, shape, figure, perhaps with an implication of beauty, which is expressed in the English version. *Consume*, literally make old, wear out, waste away. See above on Ps. xxxii. 3. *Is to consume*, will do so, or is about to do so. The last clause is even more obscure than what precedes. The last word in Hebrew means *to him* (or *it*), which most interpreters exchange, by an enallage of number, into *them*. It may how

ever be referred directly to the nearest antecedent, *hell*, the grave, or to death, personified in the first clause. *From* (their) *dwelling*, i. e. driven from it, (they descend or they belong) *to him*. However harsh the ellipsis here assumed may seem, it is really less so than to omit the preposition with some writers, or the pronoun with others, or with one to understand *from dwelling* to mean a dwelling which is not a dwelling, or, as we might say, an *undwelling*. Apart from these minute verbal difficulties, the general idea of the verse is plain, to wit that they who are now an object of envy or congratulation are soon to be deprived by death of all their coveted and boasted advantages.

16 (15.) *Only God will redeem my soul from the hand of Hell, for he will take me. Selah.* The Hebrew particle at the beginning of the sentence always denotes a limitation or exception. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 8. xxxix. 12 (11.) It may here mean either that his own case is excepted from the destruction which he has been describing, and which might seem to be described as universal; or that God alone can afford that safety which the rich fool hopes to derive from his secular advantages. *Redeem*, in allusion to vs. 8, 9 (7, 8) above. The *hand* is a common emblem of power, but it may here belong to a personification of *Sheol*, the grave, or hell, like that of death in v. 15 (14.) *For he will take me*, i. e., as some suppose, will take me to himself, accept me. But as the verb is nowhere absolutely used in this sense, it is better to explain it as a parallel expression to *redeem*. 'He will redeem me from the hand of Sheol, for he will take me (out of it.)' Either of these constructions is more natural than that which makes Sheol the subject of the last verb. 'He will redeem me from the hand of Sheol, when it seizes (or would seize) me.' The hostile sense thus put upon the verb may be justified by the analogy of Isai. xxviii. 19; but the change of subject and the

less usual meaning of the particle (כִּי) are not to be assumed without necessity.

17 (16.) *Be not thou afraid because a man grows rich, because the glory of his house increases.* Here begins the application or practical conclusion of the foregoing meditations. It is marked by a change of form, the Psalmist now no longer speaking of himself, but to himself or to another, as the person most directly interested in his subject. See a similar transition in Ps. xxxii. 8, and compare the parental or authoritative tone of the address with that in Ps. xxxiv. 12 (11.) *Fear not*, be not apprehensive or solicitous, not merely for thyself, but for the cause of truth and goodness. See above, on Ps. xxxvii. 1. The conjunction in the first clause may also be translated *when* or *though*. But the proper causal meaning of the particle should always be preferred when admissible, and especially in cases like the present, where it yields not only a good sense but the best sense, since the increasing wealth and honour of the wicked is certainly assigned as the cause or occasion of the anxious apprehensions here forbidden. The use of the English present tense in the translation of this verse is merely idiomatic, since in such connexions it is really a future. The verb of the first clause is a causative, and strictly means to *enrich* or *make rich*. The transition to the neuter or intransitive sense is precisely similar to that of the English verb *increase*, which strictly means to *make greater*, but in this very sentence has the intransitive sense of *growing* (or *becoming*) *greater*. There is no other clear example of the first Hebrew verb being so used. Dan. xi. 2, and Prov. x. 4, are at least ambiguous. *A man* cannot of itself denote a *bad man*, but that idea is suggested by the context, and especially by the use of the word *man* in vs. 8 (7), 13 (12.) *Glory* or *honour* here includes all the sensible effects of riches, as a source of admiration and applause. *House*, in the wide sense, common to both lan-



guages, including both the dwelling and the family, the house and household. See Gen. vii. 1. xviii. 19. xxxv. 2. 1. 4.

18 (17.) *For not in his death will he take the whole; not down will go after him his glory.* The form of the original is here retained as far as possible, in order to exhibit its highly idiomatic character. The position of the negative in both clauses makes it far more emphatic than in our English collocation. *At his death*, in his dying, when he dies. *The whole*: this word is usually rendered *all*, but is invariably a substantive in Hebrew, and is here determined to be such by the definite article prefixed. *Not the whole*, however, or *not all*, is by no means so significant a phrase in English as in Hebrew, where the absence of indefinite pronouns makes this the only way of saying *not any thing*, i. e. nothing. While the words therefore certainly mean that *he shall not take all*, they likewise mean that *he shall not take any*, of his secular possessions with him; and this stronger sense is here required by the context. *His glory*, as in the preceding verse, his wealth and the honours or distinctions springing from it. *Descend after him*, not in the moral or legal sense of a hereditary descent to his heirs, but in the local sense of a descent into the grave or the unseen world. The whole verse assigns a reason for not envying the wealthy sinner, namely, because he will be soon obliged to leave his wealth behind him.

19 (18.) *For his soul in his life he will bless, and (others) will praise thee because thou doest good to thyself.* There is no need of giving כִּי the sense of *but, though*, or any other than its proper causal sense of *for, because*. See above, on v. 17 (16.) This verse assigns the reason of the fact alleged in the one before it. The wealthy sinner is to carry nothing with him when he dies, because he is to have his 'good things' in the present life. This is God's appointment in accordance

with his own free choice. *In his life (or lifetime)*, as long as he lives, *he is to bless his soul (or himself)*, i. e. to reckon himself happy, and to be so esteemed by others. In the last clause, the third person is abruptly exchanged for the second, and the wealthy sinner, of whom the Psalmist had been speaking, to himself or his disciple, is directly addressed, as if personally present. This application of the figure called apostrophe is made with great skill and rhetorical effect. The plural verb is indefinite, as in v. 14 (13) above. *They*, i. e. men in general, or others, as distinguished from himself. The verb itself means strictly to *acknowledge* or confess; then more specifically, to acknowledge benefits received, to *thank*, and then to *praise* in general. See above, on Ps. vi. 6 (5.) The primary meaning may be here still kept in view, by understanding him to mean, *they will recognise thee (or take knowledge of thee) that thou doest good (or as one doing good) to thyself*. There is no need of substituting either a present or a past tense for the futures, which are perfectly appropriate in speaking of a course of conduct yet to be acted out, the wealthy sinner being represented as still living, both in this verse and the one before it. There is pungent sarcasm in the close of this verse: they will praise thee because thou doest good—to *thyself*. Or, because thou doest well—for *thyself*. The addition of this last phrase serves to characterize vividly, not only the rich sinner but his flatterers. There can be little doubt that our Saviour tacitly alluded to the first clause of this verse, when he made Abraham say to Dives, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” (Luke xvi. 25.) This is indeed a most instructive commentary on the passage now before us, as exhibiting the future revolution in the relative position of the parties, as a reason for not envying the wealthy sinner now. It is equally certain, that the Rich Fool’s address to his own soul, in

Luke xii. 19, was suggested by the same clause of the psalm before us, *in his lifetime he will bless his soul*. Indeed the whole conception of the Rich Man in the one case, and the Rich Fool in the other, may be said to be borrowed from this psalm, and may therefore derive instructive and interesting illustration from it.

20 (19.) *It shall go (or thou shalt go) to the generation of his fathers; for ever they shall not see light*. The first verb may be either a third person feminine, agreeing with *soul*, or a second person masculine, addressed directly to the wealthy sinner. In the latter case, we must suppose an immediate change to the third person, in order to account for the expression *his fathers*. In either case, the idea is that *he shall go*, though this would not be a correct translation of the Hebrew words. The whole clause has reference to the frequent description of death in the Old Testament, as a man's sleeping with his fathers, or being gathered to his fathers. *Generation* may be taken as a collective term, denoting the successive generations of his fathers, either natural or spiritual, i. e. either his literal progenitors, or his predecessors in the same way of thinking and the same course of life. There is no absurdity indeed in supposing the two senses to be here coincident. *To perpetuity they shall not see*, in our idiom, *they shall never see*. *The light*, i. e. *the light of life*, or *the light of the living*, an expression used by David, Ps. lvi. 14 (13.) The meaning of the whole verse is, that the wealthy sinner is to die as his fathers died before him, and continue dead like them, without returning to revisit, much less to repossess, the riches and honours which he once imagined were to last for ever. This completes the proof that these advantages are not legitimate or even rational occasions of envious dissatisfaction to the righteous.

21 (20.) *Man* (that is) *in honour and understandeth not is likened to the beasts* (that) *are destroyed*. The first verb in this verse and the first verb in v. 13 (12) differ only in a single letter (יִלְכֹךְ and יִבְרִיךְ), in consequence of which they are confounded by the ancient Greek and Syriac translators, and some modern critics have proposed to amend one of the places by assimilation to the other. But the prevalent practice of the Hebrew writers, where the same burden or *refrain* recurs, is not to repeat it slavishly, but with some slight variation in the form, which not unfrequently suggests a new idea, or modifies the one before expressed. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 10. xlii. 12 (11.) So here, at the close of the first strophe, the rich fool is compared to the brutes that perish, with respect to the uncertainty of his enjoyments; and again at the close of the second, with respect to his irrationality, the points of comparison being distinct but inseparable. No wonder that the sinner is cut off unawares like the brutes, when in fact he is equally irrational. By tampering with the text of either passage, therefore, we take from the psalm one of its moral lessons, as well as one of its rhetorical beauties.

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## PSALM L.

UNDER the figure of a great judicial process, God himself is introduced, exposing and condemning the hypocrisy of formalists, and expounding the true nature of his law. After a striking introduction, vs. 1—6, he reproves the perversion, and exhibits the true meaning, of the first table of the law, vs.

7—15, and then of the second, vs. 16—21, and closes with a solemn warning and a gracious promise, vs. 22—23.

1. *A Psalm. By Asaph. The Almighty, God, Jehovah, speaks, and calls the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.* Asaph was one of David's chief musicians (1 Chron. xv. 17, 19), and also an inspired psalmist (1 Chron. xxv. 2. 2 Chron. xxix. 30.) In both these capacities the psalm might be ascribed to him, nor is it possible either to prove or disprove that it was composed by him. *Mighty* or *Almighty* is not an adjective agreeing with the next word (*the Mighty God*), but a substantive in apposition with it. Three divine names are put together in a kind of climax, *El, Elohim, Jehovah*. The first represents God as almighty, the second as the only proper object of worship and (by its plural form) as perfect, the third as self-existent and eternal, and at the same time as the peculiar God of Israel. The same combination occurs in Josh. xxii. 22. It is here intended to enhance the grandeur of the scene by setting forth the titles of the judge or sovereign. *Speaks*, or more exactly *spoke, has spoken*, by which however we may understand an act just past. The same remark applies to the word *calls*, which is here used in the sense of summoning or citing. From sunrise to sunset, or from east to west, is a natural description of the earth in its whole extent, including its remotest bounds but not excluding that which lies between them. See above, on Ps. ii. 8.

2. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.* He comes forth, in a splendid and imposing manner, from his royal residence, the seat of the theocracy, which is described as perfectly beautiful, not only in a moral and spiritual sense, but in reference also to its lofty situation, celebrated in Ps. xlviii. 3 (2) above. The Hebrew verb is borrowed from the

sublime theophany in Deut. xxxiii. 2. See also Ps. lxxx. 2 (1.) xciv. 1.

3. *Our God shall come—and let him not be silent—fire before him shall devour, and around him it shall be tempestuous exceedingly.* The future in the first clause may be rendered *he is coming*, as if the sound of his voice and the light of his glory had preceded his actual appearance. The imagery is borrowed from the giving of the law at Sinai. Ex. xix. 16. xx. 18. Consuming fire is a common emblem of God's vindicatory justice (Deut. xxxii. 22. 2 Thess. i. 8), and of God himself considered as a righteous God (Deut. iv. 24. ix. 3. Heb. xii. 29.)

4. *He will call to the heavens above and to the earth, to judge his people.* The future, as before, describes an act just about to be performed. It might even be translated, *he is calling*. The compound preposition, *from over*, is used adverbially in the sense of *above*. See for example, Gen. i. 7. The strict sense, *from above*, would here be inappropriate, since God is represented not as speaking from heaven, much less from above it, but as appearing upon earth, and visibly coming out of Zion. In our idiom these words would naturally mean that he summons heaven and earth to sit in judgment on his people. But according to Hebrew usage, the last clause may refer to the remoter antecedent, the subject of the principal verb, and be translated, *so that he may judge his people*. The heavens and earth, put for the whole creation, are summoned not as judges but as witnesses, as appears from v. 6 below. See Deut. iv. 26. xxx. 19. xxxi. 28, and compare Isai. i. 2:

5. *Gather for me my saints, ratifying my covenant over sacrifice.* The judge here addresses, as it were, the ministerial officers of justice. Compare Matt. xxiv. 31. *For me*, as my



messengers, acting in my behalf, or *to me*, i. e. to the place where I am, here, around me. *My saints*, the objects of my mercy, those whom I have called and specially distinguished. See above, on Ps. iv. 4 (3.) The term is here descriptive of a relation, not of an intrinsic quality. *Ratifying*, literally *cutting*, striking, perhaps in allusion to the practice of slaying and dividing victims as a religious rite accompanying solemn compacts. See Gen. xv. 10, 18. The same usage may be referred to in the following words, *over sacrifice*, i. e. standing over it, or *on sacrifice*, i. e. founding the engagement on a previous appeal to God. There is probably allusion to the great covenant transaction recorded in Ex. xxiv. 4—8. This reference to sacrifice shows clearly that what follows was *not* intended to discredit or repudiate that essential symbol of the typical or ceremonial system.

6. *And (now) the heavens have declared his righteousness, for God (is) judge himself. Selah.* The heavens are witnesses of God's judicial rectitude, *for he himself* (and not a delegated man or angel) *is the judge* (on this occasion.) Or the last words may be rendered, *he is judging*, i. e. acting as a judge. The parties and the witnesses having been summoned, the judicial process now begins. The pause, denoted by the *Selah*, is one indicative of awe, excited by the dread solemnity of these proceedings.

7. *Hear, my people, and let me speak, and let me testify against thee. God, thy God, am I.* The introductory description being ended, the divine judgment now begins. *Let me speak*, or *I will speak*, the peculiar form of the Hebrew verb sometimes expressing strong desire and sometimes fixed determination. See above, on Ps. ii. 3. God is himself the witness against Israel, by whom the charge is to be proved, the heavens and the earth being only witnesses of the judicial

scene or spectacle. I am not only *God*, but *thy God*, bound to thee by covenant, and reciprocally claiming thy allegiance. This may be added as a reason why he has a right to testify against them; or it may be the beginning of the testimony itself. 'Let me testify against thee as thy God,' or, 'I will testify against thee, that I am thy God,' although I am not so regarded or so treated.

8. *Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee, and thy burnt-offerings before me always.* The insertion of the words *to have been*, in the common version, seems to make the clause mean, that although they had neglected this external rite, it was of no importance, whereas the simple meaning of the Hebrew sentence is, that they were not chargeable with this neglect, implying that the observance was obligatory, which is in perfect keeping with the tenor of the psalm. 'I do not charge thee with withholding the material offerings to which I am entitled, for in truth they are ever before me.' To the generic term *sacrifices*, animal oblations, he adds the more specific one, *burnt-offering*, the usual English version of a Hebrew term, denoting the principal and ordinary expiatory offering of the Mosaic ritual. See above, on Ps. xx. 4 (3.) xl. 7 (6.)

9. *I will not take from thy house a bullock, (nor) from thy folds he-goats.* Here begins the correction of the false and foolish notion, extensively prevalent among the heathen, and not unknown among the ancient Jews, especially in times of great corruption, that the sacrifices were designed to satisfy some physical necessity on God's part, whether in the way of food or otherwise. In opposition to this impious absurdity, it is argued, that, even if God needed such supplies, he would not be dependent on the worshipper, who is here addressed directly as an individual, with great advantage to the

liveliness and force of the whole passage. 'If I needed bulls and goats, as you imagine, I would not be under the necessity of seeking them at your hands.'

10. *For to me (belongs) every beast of the forest, the cattle in hills of a thousand.* This last idiomatic phrase may either mean a thousand hills, or hills where the cattle rove by thousands, with probable allusion to the hilly grounds of Bashan beyond Jordan. See above, on Ps. xxii. 13 (12.) According to etymology, the noun in the first clause means an *animal*, and that in the second *beasts* or *brutes* in general. See above, on Ps. xlix. 13 (12.) But when placed in antithesis, the first denotes a wild beast, and the second domesticated animals or cattle. Both words were necessary to express God's sovereign propriety in the whole animal creation. Thus understood, the verse assigns a reason for the negative assertion in the one before it. Even if God could stand in need of animal oblations, for his own sake, or for their sake, he would not be under the necessity of coming to man for them, since the whole animal creation is his property and perfectly at his disposal.

11. *I know every bird of the hills, and the population of the field (is) with me*, i. e. in my presence, under my inspection, and within my reach. The past tense of the verb suggests not merely that it is so now, but that it has been so from the beginning. This is no newly-acquired knowledge or authority, but such as are involved in the very relation between creature and creator. *Population*, literally, movement, motion, i. e. animal motion, and by a natural metonymy that which lives and moves.

12. *If I were hungry, I would not say (so) to thee; for to me (belongs) the world and its fullness*, that which fills it, its

contents and its inhabitants. See above, on Ps. xxiv. 1. The first clause may be rendered, with a closer adherence to the form of the original, *if I am hungry, I will not say (so) to thee*. All this is said upon the supposition, that God may, in some sense, need supplies of this kind, although even then he would be wholly independent of man's bounty or fidelity in furnishing them. But the supposition is of course a false one, and is so represented in the next verse.

13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls and drink the blood of goats?* The future of the Hebrew verb is very expressive, suggesting the ideas of possibility, necessity, and desire. Do I desire the flesh and blood of beasts for my refreshment? Do I need them for my sustenance? Or is it even possible for me to use them, in the way that you imagine? The negative answer, which is obviously expected to these questions, presupposes the great doctrine that Jehovah is a spirit, and as such exempt from all corporeal necessities. This then is another refutation of the gross and impious error that he needed their oblations. If they were necessary in themselves, he could obtain them elsewhere; and that they are not necessary, follows, as an inevitable consequence, from the spirituality of the divine nature. This is not the language of dry and formal ratiocination, which, on such a subject and in such a connexion, would be not only misplaced but revolting. It is rather the language of impassioned and indignant expostulation, holding up the absurdities, to which the error of the formal worshipper inevitably tended as a refutation of the error itself.

14. *Sacrifice to God thanksgiving, and (so) pay unto the Most High thy vows.* The first word means something more than *offer*, and contains a distinct allusion to the animal sacrifices mentioned in v. 8 above. This is not an exhortation to

offer thanks or praise *instead* of material sacrifices, which would be inconsistent with the express requisition of the latter, but to offer them as expressions of thanksgiving, or in other words, to offer these as they were intended to be offered, not as a meritorious operation, nor as gross attempts to feed the deity, but as symbolical expressions of devout affection, repentance, faith, and love, all which we may suppose to be represented, or at least suggested, by the single act of praise or thanksgiving, here explicitly enjoined. The imperative in the last clause may, according to a very common Hebrew idiom, be resolved into a future, and the whole verse paraphrased as follows: 'If you offer your material sacrifices, not merely as such, but as the prescribed expression of inward spiritual exercises, you will thereby really discharge your obligations to the Being whom you worship.'

15. *And call upon me in a day of distress; I will free thee, and thou shalt honour me.* The imperative in the first clause is dependent upon that in the preceding verse. The connexion may be rendered clearer by substituting *then* for *and*. Offer such sacrifices, and you will really discharge your obligations; then, when you call upon me, I will hear you. *Thou shalt honour me*, thou shalt have occasion to renew thy praises and thanksgivings for new benefits received. With this encouraging assurance closes the divine exposition of the sacrificial system.

16. *And to the wicked God saith, What hast thou (to do) to declare my statutes, and take my covenant into thy mouth?* Thus far the doctrine of the psalm has had respect to the formal worshipper, whose rites are mere external services, expressive of no inward faith or love. But now it is applied to him who actually violates the law which he professes to

acknowledge. *The wicked*, the man of vicious life, who is afterwards described with more particularity. He is not necessarily distinct in real life from the formalist of the foregoing context. The description is not of two individuals, but of two classes, to which one and the same person may belong, or two characters, which one and the same person may exhibit. *Saith*, said, or hath said, on the same ideal occasion. *What (is) to thee*, the only Hebrew mode of saying, *what hast thou*, i. e. what right or reason hast thou? *To declare*, either by profession of one's own faith, or by authoritative teaching of others. There may perhaps be some allusion to the primary meaning of the Hebrew verb, which is to count or number. See above, on Ps. xl. 6 (5.) To count off or reckon up God's statutes is a very natural expression for censorious or ostentatious iteration, especially in this connexion, where an obvious reference to the ten commandments follows. *My covenant*, my law considered as conditional, or as involving reciprocal engagements upon my part. See above, on v. 5. *To take into the mouth*, or more literally, *to take up on the mouth*, is a strong idiomatic phrase for uttering, pronouncing. See above, on Ps. xvi. 4.

17. *And thou hast hated instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee.* The very person who enforces the law, in all its rigour, upon others, refuses to submit to it himself, and treats its precepts not only with neglect but with contempt. This passage seems to have been present to the mind of Paul, in that remarkable series of interrogations, "Thou therefore which teachest another teachest thou not thyself," etc. Rom. ii. 21—23.

18. *If thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him, and with adulterers (has been) thy portion.* The first clause conveys far more than the simple idea of consent. The expres-



sion *if thou sawest* implies great eagerness and an instinctive drawing towards the thief as a congenial spirit. The second verb in Hebrew denotes a cordial and complacent acquiescence. *Thy portion* or participation, common interest, communion. These particular sins are mentioned with reference to their prohibition in the seventh and eighth commandments (Ex. xx. 14, 15.)

19. *Thy mouth thou hast given up to evil, and thy tongue will weave (or frame) deceit.* The ninth commandment is now added to the other two, as being habitually violated by the person here addressed. *Given up to*, literally, *sent out with (or into) evil*. The first clause is descriptive of mere evil speaking, the second of more artificial and ingenious lying. Both verbs include present time, but the first with the additional idea of an early habit, formed and settled in time past, the other with that of an inveterate habit, not likely to be broken or reformed hereafter.

20. *Thou wilt sit (and) against thy brother speak ; at the son of thy mother thou wilt aim a blow.* To the general charge of falsehood is now added the specific one of slander, not against strangers, but his nearest friends. The idea suggested by the future is that such behaviour may be confidently looked for on the part of such a character. *Thou wilt sit*, in the company of others, or more specifically of the wicked, or of other wicked slanderers, as one of them. See above, on v. 18. As *brother* might be understood as meaning merely any other man, it is determined by the unambiguous phrase, *thy mother's son*. This is mentioned merely as an extreme case, not as excluding other relations and friends, but rather comprehending them. *Aim a blow*, literally, *give a thrust*, so as to cast him down. The blow meant is a stroke of the tongue Compare Jer. xviii. 18.

21. *These things hast thou done, and I have held my peace, thou hast imagined I was just like thyself. I will reprove thee, and array (thy sins) before thine eyes.* God is described as silent when he does not interpose with his reproofs or manifest his displeasure. See above, on Ps. xxviii. 1. *Imagined*: the Hebrew verb originally means to liken or compare, and another of the same form to be silent, so that it is peculiarly appropriate in this place, where the mention of God's silence immediately precedes, and the imagining referred to was a false assimilation of the Most High to the sinner himself. *Just like*, or exactly like, the intensive adverb corresponding to the emphatic repetition of the verb in Hebrew. In our idiom, an adversative particle is almost indispensable between the clauses; but the more abrupt transition is congenial with the spirit and usage of the Hebrew language. *Array*, arrange, set in order, so that none shall be omitted or overlooked. See above, on Ps. v. 4 (3.) *Before thine eyes*, literally, to thine eyes, or to thy face, again implying that the sight of them is not to be avoided. This declaration of severe fidelity forms an appropriate conclusion to the second lesson of the psalm, or that in which the mask is stripped off from the vicious hypocrite, who professes to serve God while he lives in the grossest violation of his precepts, as in the first part (vs. 7—15) it was torn from the formal hypocrite, who satisfies himself with a mere outward and mechanical performance of rites designed to be significant of spiritual and devout affections.

22. *Oh consider this, forgetters of God, lest I rend and there be no deliverer.* To both the argumentative invectives which precede there is added in conclusion a solemn exhortation, including both a warning or admonitory threatening and a promise. This verse contains the warning. The Hebrew particle of entreaty (אֲנִי) is not so well expressed by the *now* of the English Bible as by the *oh* of the Prayer Book version

The image presented in the last clause is that of a ravenous beast, and more especially a lion. See above, on Ps. xxii. 14 (13.) *No deliverer*, or more literally, *none delivering*. The description of those addressed, as *forgetting* (or *forgetters of*) *God*, suggests that both forms of hypocrisy exhibited in this psalm owe their origin to ignorance, mistaken notions, or oblivion, of God's attributes and purposes and former acts.

23. (The man) *sacrificing praise shall honour me, and prepare a way* (that) *I may show him the salvation of God*, that of which he is the author. See above, on Ps. iv. 9 (8.) This phrase is used instead of *my salvation*, for the sake of a more sonorous close. The common version of the first clause makes it an identical proposition: *whoso offereth praise glorifieth me*. At the same time it greatly weakens the expression by the use of the ambiguous term *offer*. The words are all borrowed from vs. 14, 15, to which there is therefore a direct allusion, and by which the clause must be interpreted. It is really a promise that he whose offerings are genuine expressions of thanksgiving shall have cause or occasion to praise God for his mercies. The rest of the sentence is more doubtful. According to the construction above given, which seems to be required by the accents, the meaning is, that he who offers the right kind of sacrifice, as before explained, prepares the way, literally *sets* or *lays* a way, by which he shall himself attain to the experience of salvation. But as this confines the promise to the observance of the first great lesson taught in the psalm, we may give it a wider application, and the sentence a more regular form, by rendering the last clause thus, *and* (the man) *ordering* (his) *way, I will show the salvation of God*. The man ordering his way, i. e. placing it, defining it, marking it out, is then contrasted with such as turn aside unto their crooked ways (Ps. cxxv. 5.) The precise form of the construction is, *(as to the man) ordering* (his) *way, I will show*

*him the salvation of God.* This clause then has reference to the second lesson of the psalm (vs. 16—21), as the other to the first (vs. 7—15.) The preposition before *salvation* in Hebrew often gives the verb *to see* the pregnant sense of gazing at or viewing with delight. See above, on Ps. xxii. 18 (17.) xxxvii.

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